



REAL ESTATE BROKER'S INSIDER

Management and sales tools for the residential real estate broker

Agent Recruiting

Aiming to attract agents? Try staging your office

Staging is all the rage for sellers these days, but maybe brokers should do a bit of staging for their offices.

Sprucing up the physical appearance of your office can make a big difference in attracting agents to your company says Adam Lerman, Century 21's national recruiting director and The Recruiting Network's Recruiter of the Year for 2009.

Just as staging a home can quickly and cheaply boost curb appeal, so can a quick makeover for your offices.

"It's unbelievable what two cans of paint will do to your lobby area," Lerman says.

To help Century 21 brokers scrutinize their digs, Lerman has assembled a checklist. Among the items Lerman says you should look for:

- Are there cracks in the walls or peeling paint?
- Is the decor outdated or fresh?
- How does the office smell?
- Is there toilet paper in the bathroom?
- Is there coffee in the break room?
- Is the parking lot sufficiently lit?
- Do agents have enough meeting space?

Consider bringing in a third party to give your offices a once-over and some honest feedback.

None of that means Lerman is telling brokers to invest big money in bricks and mortar at a time when many brokers are facing tight budgets — and questioning the value of commercial real estate as a result. Indeed, he says brokers might consider economizing by having low-producing agents share desks, rather than having private desks.

The office checklist is just part of the Roadmap to Success recruiting package that Lerman created and that earned him Recruiter of the Year honors.

Some of Lerman's other tips:

• **Tie recruiting activities to your financial goals.** Take some time to set your financial goals, then determine how many new agents and experienced agents you need to hit your goal.

"A lot of brokers don't realize what they want their goal profit to be," Lerman says. "They want to recruit as many people as possible, which is great, but you want to make sure they're productive."

"Every consumer lead can be a recruiting lead, and every recruiting lead can be a consumer lead."

• **Keep track of leads.** Say you talk to a potential agent but you realize she isn't quite ready to leave her salaried job. Don't just dump her name in the trash.

"Put it in an incubation campaign for later on, when the market turns," he says.

And keep in mind that even if you don't hire a potential agent, that person might do business with you as a buyer or seller.

"Every recruiting lead is a good lead — don't lose them," Lerman

says. "Every consumer lead can be a recruiting lead, and every recruiting lead can be a consumer lead."

• **Go back to basics.** Lerman

encourages brokers to use scripts, dialogues, and letter templates when communicating with potential recruits.

"In a great market, brokers didn't need to do anything," he says. "They were recruiting hand over fist."

• **Seize the opportunity.** Forget the conventional wisdom that the real estate market is retrenching and you should, too.

"This is the best market to recruit in," Lerman says. "There's an abundance of inventory that needs

This article was reprinted from the July 15, 2009 issue of *Real Estate Broker's Insider*.

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professionals to market. Interest rates are incredibly low, and also there's the \$8,000 tax credit."

The agents you recruit now could be the stars of tomorrow, he says.

"When the market turns, oh my God, they're going to be your top producers."

- **Embrace part-timers.** Lerman doesn't call them part-timers but "referral agents." These are people who have big spheres of influence and real estate licenses, and want to put their contacts to use by referring buyers and sellers.

Don't shun these important people. Welcome them.

- **Retain your agents by selling them on your benefits.** "Retention doesn't start when the agent says he wants to leave," Lerman says.

Instead, it starts as soon as the agent joins. Agents are susceptible to grass-is-greener thinking. Head that off by reminding them that the grass is greenest at your company.

"You keep your agents by educating them," Lerman says. "Every company loses agents because they

think they can get a better deal at Brand X."

- **Interview intelligently.** Ask traditional interview questions and you'll get the "right" answers. To truly learn about your recruits, use a strategy Lerman calls STAR (situation, task, action, result). Ask potential hires how they responded when they had to deal with a particular situation.

Contact: Adam Lerman, Century 21 Real Estate, 973-407-5746, adam.lerman@century21.com; The Recruiting Network, www.recruitingpipeline.com. REBI