



REAL ESTATE BROKER'S INSIDER

Management and sales tools for the residential real estate broker

Management Tips

A reading list for brokers

St. Louis broker John Mayfield is a big fan of Malcolm Gladwell, author of best sellers *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* and *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*.

Gladwell's latest, *Outliers: The Story of Success*, argues that raw talent and intelligence are overrated. He says Bill Gates and Tiger Woods are great partly because of innate abilities but also because of hard work and fortunate timing.

Mayfield also recommends Seth Godin's *Purple Cow: Transform Your Business by Being Remarkable*. To illustrate the premise during a sales meeting, Mayfield once produced a bunch of cow shaped Beanie Babies — all were brown and white except the one Mayfield painted purple.

Mayfield's final suggestion is *Mass Affluence: Seven New Rules of Marketing to Today's Consumer* by Paul Nunes and Brian Johnson. A study of consumer preferences relevant for real estate professionals.

George Harvey of Telluride Properties increasingly sells high-end Colorado homes to foreign nationals, so his reading has focused on the international market.

One favorite: *The World Is Flat* by Thomas Friedman.

"It is changing my thinking exponentially about how fast I need to run to catch up with my business," Harvey said.

Harvey also recommends a subscription to *The Economist* magazine to keep up with the international market.

Friedman and *The Economist* serve up the 10,000-foot view of the world. But what do you do when a buyer from China or India shows up in your office?

For that occasion, Harvey recommends the *Kiss, Bow or Shake Hands* series by Terri Morrison. There are titles for Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

Top-producing agent Buddy West of Patterson Schwartz Real Estate in Hockessin, DE, likes *Good to Great* by Jim Collins. A study of how "good" companies push themselves to higher levels of performance and success. Collins also is the author of an earlier study, *Built to Last*.

West also recommends *First, Break All the Rules* by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman. This study of leadership gives few easy answers to managing people. There's no cookie-cutter approach to motivating your staff, he concludes. Buckingham's sequels

include *Now, Discover Your Strengths* and *The One Thing You Need to Know*.

Speaker and coach Jerry Rossi suggests *Freakonomics* by Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner, not because he agrees with its assertion that Realtors are like the Ku Klux Klan. Rather, he suggests it because it's a longtime best-seller that is affecting the way your customers think about the real estate industry.

"You better read this book, because your buyers and sellers are reading it," Rossi says.

Rossi also recommends *Your Marketing Sucks* by Mark Stevens because so many brokers and agents waste so much marketing money. Stevens advocates scrutinizing your ad spending and stopping the campaigns that don't work. Also by Stevens: *Your Management Sucks*.

Speaker and coach Bill Barrett suggests *The Nordstrom Way* by Robert Spector and Patrick McCarthy, an examination of the department store known for its white-glove service. A second book by the same authors is titled *The Nordstrom Way to Customer Service Excellence*.

And finally, as our lives get busier and more stressful by the day, Barrett recommends *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff ... and it's All Small Stuff* by Richard Carlson, a guide to tuning out the noise, focusing on the tasks at hand, and realizing what really matters. REB

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