

Pumping Up Your Real Estate Career

If you're a real estate agent, you are well aware of the downsides that people outside the field know little or nothing about. Before you could begin working for a broker, you had to acquire a thorough knowledge of real estate law, terminology and math. Regardless of which state you live in, you had to pass a test for your license, and pay a hefty fee for the privilege of holding it.

While you may not have had much trouble finding an office to work through, you might not have expected to have to pay for advertisements for your listings and possibly for desk space at the agency. Health insurance? Maybe, if you're lucky, you'll have the opportunity to pay the full premium for a group policy. Of course, you've got to sell some stuff before you can afford to do that. You have to get lots of listings. You have to close sales and set aside an emergency fund for the tough months when few or no sales come your way. Otherwise, you won't be able to pay your own bills, much less the ones the broker keeps reminding you of.



Talk about an independent contractor! Not only that. You sometimes get the feeling you're surrounded by vultures. Maybe not in your own office-but in the ones down the street and around the block and everywhere else in town.

Yes, you're well aware that you're in a heavy-competition business. You've got someone really interested in a \$450,000 home you showed them last week. They're practically ready to put the money down today-only when you check to make sure it's still on the market, you find out it sold yesterday. The disappointed couple doesn't want to see anything else, they say, edging their way to the door. You just know someone else showed them their second-choice, and they're on their way to that other office now.



Of course, you're here to serve the client. That's what it's all about. That's why you work weekends and evenings, when it's convenient for them to see the properties. That's why you give every potential buyer your home phone and cell phone. Better that they call you at the most inconvenient time than take a chance on someone else closing the sale. Sometimes it seems as if you've got no time to yourself.

Added to that is something that even people outside the industry know: the real estate market swings with the economy. Everyone knows about buyer's markets and seller's markets. When the fed inches the interest rate up yet again, you know that will affect sales. There are fast-inflating bubbles

and bursting bubbles. And of course that means that your income is dependent on the same economy that drives the real estate market.

As hectic as the real estate business is, there is some rather excruciating down time. Like the Sunday afternoon you spend hosting an Open House that only a few vaguely-interested people drift through, probably to get decorating ideas or just to "see what it's like inside." Or "phone duty" at the office, which amounts to little more than being an unpaid receptionist.

If only there was a way to make some money during that down time-something you could do no matter where you were or what time of day or night it was.

Guess what-there is, and it's called a home-based business. It's like having a safety net to catch you during the months when the commission checks are small or nonexistent. The hours you work at a home-based business are completely flexible, so if Mrs. McGinty calls to look at a listing, you can drop everything to take care of your potential buyer, and get back to your second-income business later on. There is no time-clock to punch, no boss to answer to except yourself. You're in complete control of this business. After all, it's your own!

While called home-based, you can be taking care of business no matter where you are. All you need is a computer and a phone. Well, you've always got those with you anyway, right? Instead of wasting an afternoon at an Open House, you can use the time to generate income. Phone duty at the office? You can get out your laptop and make the time pay you, even if your broker won't.



Home-based businesses are exploding as a way to supplement the incomes of people who work on commission. Knowing you have a second source of income without the hassles of a boss, commuting, and rigid scheduling is giving commissioned workers the sense of security that no other second job can.