

# BRANCH MANAGERS: Are you at the top of your game?

## Today, you can't afford not to be...

In this two-part series, I will discuss the current trials and tribulations that branch managers face and how to overcome these obstacles.

Technology is the prominent topic of conversation in almost every real estate office in the country today. Each company is working diligently to keep up with the next new development on the information super highway. Due to the incredible amount of information now available to the general public, the public's perceived value of a real estate agent is changing dramatically. As a result, the value of the company the agent works with is also changing. For example, 10 years ago agents joined companies based on the great value of a multi-function high-speed fax machine and maximum exposure through the local newspaper classified section. Today, the average buyer or seller can see the complete inventory of homes for sale on the Internet from the comfort of his or her own home. People no longer need to read the classified section of the newspaper. Email is now the primary means of sending and receiving contracts, and fax machines are rapidly becoming obsolete.

Today's branch manager faces a new and challenging set of circumstances with running a real estate office. Recruiting and retention are key factors in maintaining a productive and profitable office. Managers work diligently every day to solve problems that occur as a result of daily business operation. They are also responsible for recruiting additional agents into the office while keeping the existing agents happy. And with the dramatic downswing in the market between 2007 and 2008, the job of keeping agents content with their current company can be quite daunting.

The first place to start for managers trying to capture this changing marketplace is to ask themselves: "Why do I work here?" The answer to that question obviously varies from manager to manager and there may be quite a few variables. The manager needs to know the current status of all the agents in the company. He or she needs to ask his or her agents questions like:

- Are you happy with the current level of service that the company and I provide you with?
- What would cause you to leave this company?
- What would you like to see changed?
- What do you like best about working here?

The answers to these questions are quite telling about the current atmosphere in the office. It may be important to have an outside third party do the questioning to maintain honesty and integrity of the process. It is important to know who you are in the eyes of the agents and if they are happy and productive. It is difficult to expand in an office with negative thoughts and ideas from within.

After this process is complete, managers will gain a clearer understanding of their agents and can make the adjustments that are needed to correct any problems. They can then begin a plan to start recruiting effectively.

In Part 2 of this series, I will discuss how managers can successfully recruit agents to their office.



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