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**How You Can Host a Successful Open House**

**By Bea Fields**

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One of the best ways to invite the public to learn about your business is by hosting an open house. People love the chance to get a "behind the scenes" look at what you and your business are all about. These ten tips will support you in hosting an open house that is successful and allows you to market most effectively.

- (1) Create a small committee to make the preparations. Involve as many people as possible in the planning process so that all of the nuts and bolts of the event are addressed in advance.
- (2) Plan a menu that includes small finger foods and simple beverages. If you are serving alcohol, provide a transportation service to and from the event.
- (3) Send out invitations at least one month in advance. Ask people to R.S.V.P. by telephone, e-mail, or fax. If responses are low, assign a phone committee the responsibility of contacting people 48 hours in advance in order to gain commitment.
- (4) Decorate the reception area with live plants and flowers. You want people to feel at home and welcome. Adding beauty to the event will make the occasion light and memorable.
- (5) Choose a time of year when you know your business will look its best, and a time that weather will not interfere with attendance. Spring and early fall are the best times of year for hosting an open house.
- (6) Assign a host/hostess committee to greet people as they arrive.
- (7) Offer people the option to take a tour, but do not make the tour a requirement. People often want to attend strictly for social reasons or to unwind.
- (8) If your place of business contains an oven, bake something with a pleasing aroma (such as cinnamon) 30 minutes prior to the event. Pleasant food aromas instill fond memories in people which

## How You Can Host a Successful Open House

can help others connect to you more easily.

(9) Hire a professional cleaning service the day of the event to make your place of business sparkle and shine. You want your business to look and feel neat, clean, and professional.

(10) Take the day off before your event. You want to be well-rested so that you can have fun

### **Open Houses – Is The Realtor Really Working For You?**

**By Sintilia Miecevole**

As soon as their home is listed, most home sellers ask their realtor almost right away, "When are you going to hold an open house?" We need to know just how much credibility there really is in open houses for the home seller, so I hope you find the following information helpful.

Most open houses take place over the weekend when the general public is more able to preview homes. I have learned that about 95% of the people that come an open house either know a realtor or have one within their family they will use. That leaves 5% that are not working with a realtor. Of that 5%, out of curiosity, some are neighbors interested in the asking price so they can use it and other information for a comparison to their own home. The remaining small percentage end up driving by the area, notice the open house signs your agent strategically placed at each corner and walk into your house. These are strangers, possibly unqualified to purchase your house, and not only that, but your house may not be the right fit or style they are looking for anyway. Then there are those people just passing the time of day.

That being said, those that become disinterested in your house now become a prospective buyer of another house that your realtor would be happy to show them. So, now are you surprised that an open house usually benefits the realtor more than the home seller? I'm not saying an open house is necessarily useless. There have been lots of cases a home sells as a direct result of an open house. The percentage of homes sold as a direct result of open houses is minimal to say the least.

Your realtor's time is very expensive. You are paying your realtor a nice hourly wage via a commission to market and sell your home. Do you feel that nice hourly wage should be spent baking cookies and permeating the house for a possible buyer or spent wisely on mass marketing media, networking and other more effective marketing strategies? I'm sure you can answer that one.

I have to admit I would be very upset if there was an open house at my house and my realtor was discussing other houses for sale with other potential clients. After all, I pay that realtor a good commission to sell my house in a timely manner.

The thing to remember is to stay focused on the priorities of selling your home. What is required to sell your house? That's the real question because you must remember this is now no longer your "home." It is a house to be marketed, so put away all your family pictures and too personal things that will cloud the potential buyers eye to see their possessions in the house. Ask your realtor and then do it. If it means cleaning out the house or painting, do it. Do whatever it takes and your house will sell in a

timely manner.

Sintilia Miecevole is the administrator of

which has information and resources

including realtors, finding a realtor, real estate and more. Be sure to visit

for

further information.



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