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**Personal Branding Techniques for Real Estate Agents and Brokers**

**By Dan R. Vella**

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A key principle of marketing is to find something unique about what you offer as the basis of your sales message. Even if what you offer is a commodity, there is always one thing unique in your business -- you.

A big error made by many Real Estate Agents and Brokers is to try to develop an institutional image like most big companies. People do not like to do business with institutions; they like to do business with people.

In advertising terms, branding is the "image" created in the minds of people when they see or hear a name, product or logo. Companies invest a lot of money in creating and maintaining their brand, but the Internet has sparked a new trend called "Personal Branding".

Personal branding isn't only important for promoting a product, business or political cause, but also for promoting yourself for advancement within your own organization. It involves developing your personal reputation.

Branding can be done to any product, or any person. Before undertaking an exercise in personal branding, however, consider your distinctive strengths and abilities and what they offer the market place. Traditionally personal branding was for sporting celebrities who gained enormous coverage and following through their sporting prowess. Movie stars have also had celebrity status and association since movies began.

A personal brand is about creating strong, favorable associations in the minds of people that you encounter. If you don't actively do this, they will still make associations. Therefore, it may be better to be proactive and undertake the branding exercise for yourself, you cannot control what they think but can give them some information to assist with the associations.

## WHY BRANDING OURSELVES?

- Places you in a leadership role
- Enhances prestige
- Attracts the right people and right opportunities
- Adds perceived value to what you are selling
- Earns recognition
- Associates you with a trend
- Increases your earning potential
- Differentiate yourself from the competition
- Position your focused message in the hearts and minds of your target customers
- Confers top of mind status
- Increases authority and credence of decisions

## HOW DO WE BRAND OURSELVES?

Like any branding exercise, the key to personal branding is having a good product, one which you understand and pitch to the right market. The first step in personal branding is knowing who you are, find out what strengths your brand possesses and how these strengths can help you. Personal branding is not about presenting a façade to the public; a poor product will not stand up to market scrutiny. This is also a choice of brand elements, people you deal with, the look that you have, and how you conduct yourself. Once this has been done, determine what you are going to offer. As a product what do you do, what need does the product of you satisfy in the market. Next figure out the position you will take in the audience of your mind. What unique space do you wish to occupy and what unique associations do you want people to recall when they think of you?

Finally, once you have established the first three steps, manage your brand over its lifecycle. That is keep visible, be consistent and be yourself. According to Montoya, the well-known personal branding guru, the key to managing your personal brand is word-of-mouth (WOM), the most trusted form of communication.

How does one go about building a personal brand? Recognize your personal strengths and gifts! Think about how you best connect with people, consider what your

target audience needs and wants, identify the value you deliver to meet those needs and wants, and communicate in a way that reaches your constituents in their hearts and minds and via the channels that work best for you

Functional associations are important such as timeliness, quality, dedication; as are emotional associations like inspiring, leadership, being an innovator.

The three C's of personal branding are clarity, consistency and constancy.

Clarity deals with being honest about yourself and your strengths and promises of value attached to your personal brand and being clear in the way you communicate them. Often, for simplicity, you must focus on one or two aspects that are most vital and focus on communicating them. Think about the things you associate with prominent artists or managers, and they are unlikely to be complicated.

Consistency is keeping things consistent for the customers. This does not mean staying stuck in the past, but just not undertaking drastic changes. Coca Cola have had a consistent message for 50 years; the message evolves continuously and is not stagnant but is consistent. Artists like Madonna change every three or four years, but there is a consistency to the change.

Constancy means being visible with your brand and maintaining an on-going level of awareness in the marketplace. Oprah Winfrey is visible constantly, and although most of people do not have the visibility or exposure of Oprah, they can still be visible in a smaller audience. There is no point trying to build a brand image quickly to coincide with a new exhibition or performance you may have coming up - brands take time to build in consumers minds.

### A FREE PERSONAL BRANDING TOOLKIT FOR REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS

NetReal.net, a company noted for its template-based

, offers a Winter Holidays Gift for Real Estate

Agents and Brokers - the Personal Branding Toolkit:

The Personal Branding Toolkit contains the "Essential Marketing for Real Estate Professionals" ebook and 17 Real Estate Reports and the tools to personalize them with your name, contact info and photo.

NetReal's editorial team put together the top 25 highest-rated Real Estate marketing articles of 2004, and created a must-have e-book – "Essential Marketing for Real Estate Professionals". The ebook covers Marketing 101, Network marketing, Personal Marketing, Customer acquisition and retention, Telemarketing & Direct Mailing, E-marketing.

You can personalize this e-book with your data and send it to your contacts, absolutely free of charge. This is a great way to offer a helpful gift to your colleagues and partners.

The "17 free Branded Reports" allow you to create your own branded Real Estate reports (for buyers, sellers, investors, movers) with your contact info and photo/logo and an exquisite design. Distribute them to your prospects or clients as e-docs or printed materials, or upload them on your website. Show your professionalism with these great tools to acquire new clients.

The Personal Branding Toolkit for Real Estate Professionals (

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is free for everyone.

### **How Much Does My Real Estate Agent Need To Know?**

**By Christine Hancock**

Real estate agents would say that the more you tell them, the better they can negotiate on your behalf. However, the degree of trust you have with an agent may depend upon their legal obligation. Agents working for buyers have three possible choices: They can represent the buyer exclusively, called single agency, or represent the seller exclusively, called sub-agency, or represent both the buyer and seller in a dual-agency situation.

Some states require agents to disclose all possible agency relationships before they enter into a residential real estate transaction. Here is a summary of the three basic types:

1. In a traditional relationship, real estate agents and brokers have a fiduciary relationship to the seller. Be aware that the seller pays the commission of both brokers, not just the one who lists and shows the property, but also to the sub-broker, who brings the ready, willing and able buyer to the table. In most cases you will have 2 broker's splitting the commission.

\* Dual agency exists if two agents working for the same broker represent the buyer and seller in a transaction. A potential conflict of interest is created if the listing agent has advance knowledge of another buyer's offer. Therefore, the law states that a dual agent shall not disclose to the buyer that the seller will accept less than the list price, or disclose to the seller that the buyer will pay more than the offer price, without express written permission. Many times it makes sense to "assign" someone in your office one side of the transaction, thus assures there is no conflict of interest.

\* A buyer also can hire his or her own agent who will represent the buyer's interests exclusively. Sometimes a buyer's agent must be paid out of the buyer's own pocket but the buyer can trust them with financial information, knowing it will not be transmitted to the other broker and ultimately to the seller. More often the seller pays both the selling broker and the buyer's broker.

Christine began her real estate career proving herself a top producer on a new high rise development. This experience gave her valuable knowledge of construction as well as the buying process and resulted in 4-million dollars in sales during her first year.



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