

SANFORD

SYSTEMS & STRATEGIES

Newsletter

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MASSIVE SUCCESS IN A GOOD MARKET

The market is confounding, but it can also be a blessing. I know that idea is probably confounding you!

The strategies of making money in a *faltering* market can be used with **massive success** in a **good** market. Top agents use the strategies they forged in a rough market so that they can become financially independent in an easier market. Will the "easier" times come again every where? The days of sitting by the phone waiting for it to ring are over! Even if your market is still going strong, you need to have systems in place to weather any storm the market stirs up.

Our seminars will ensure that everyone from beginners to top agents will not only endure in this business but also make money, too! Lenders love our seminars because we teach agents how to make money for themselves and the lender. Associations and boards love our seminars because we get their agents fired up enough to bring some life back into their local market. Brokers, owners, and managers love our seminars because we can bring some market share back to their domain. Call our event coordinators today at 800.792.5837 and let's start planning your seminar today!

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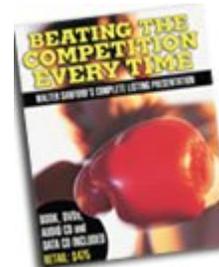
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Our Coaching Program

When times get tough, agents begin looking for a real estate coach, trainer, or mentor. But what should you look for in a real estate coach?

Well, first of all – you make sure that you're paying for the person whose name and reputation are at stake. If you're getting the "top dog" of the company, he or she is more invested to be an active participant in the coaching program. Secondly, make certain your coach generated more listings and revenue than you! Why hire someone who has not even sold as much as you? Finally, make certain the plan is customized to meet

Product of the Month



BEATING THE COMPETITON

A multi-media approach to finding, interviewing, sending pre-listing confirmations and working through objections to close the listing. Includes four different listing presentations and follow-up, a book of forms, letters and scripts. All on CD for easy manipulation. Plus you'll hear Walter speaking live about how to make the "Perfect Pre-Listing, Pre-Confirmation Package!" Winning the signature against competition is what great agents do!

Buy Now!

Sign up!



WALTER'S BLOG

Click [here](#) to sign up for your FREE daily dose of Walter Sanford! Complete the quick sign up to receive a direct link to each day's new thoughts directly from Walter's blog.

YOUR needs not the needs of any agent from Anyplace, USA.

Where can you find a coach that meets all of the above criteria and then some? Here's one hint – you're signed up for his Ezine newsletter! Feel free to call Cyndi, our coaching coordinator, [for more details](#) at 800.792.5837 with your questions about coaching or to set up a complimentary interview with Walter.

THE BEST OF "ASK WALLY"



Q. Hi, Wally! I live in one of the areas hardest hit by foreclosures in southern California. I would like to stay focused on expirds and FSBOs, but find myself asking if I'm missing the boat by not focusing on getting REO accounts. What is the best use of my time? Let's face it, everyone (REO agents, broker/managers, trainers, etc.) What is going to be the best option for me, which may or may not be in my own best interest as an agent? You seem to be an honest man. Where do you suggest I focus 100% of my efforts? Why or why not? Thank you! Bobby

A. Why devote 100% of your time on anything? I had a daily expired program, a lender-run FSBO program, and a short sale program. I also put two field personnel on staff to do the REO/BPO stuff. Take the low-hanging fruit first.

Want to read more of Walter's "Ask Wally" column?

Click [here](#) for endless questions and answers that Walter posts to his website monthly.

FEATURED ARTICLE OF THE MONTH Thriving in a Challenging Marketplace

As the market moves to a more normal stance, real estate agents are scratching their heads. Many real estate agents were weaned in an order-taker's market. Buyers were rushing to buy before that dream home was snatched up or to get a couple more appreciation points by getting that investment just a little bit earlier. Everyone was giddy, and some real estate agents forgot the business or never knew it to start with! Now that calmer head prevail and a more normal market exists in most areas, it is time to tighten up the business practices of nasty-weather agents.

Our systems, books, software, and coaching procedures have always highlighted the most efficient methods to achieve client's goals and maintain a large profit margin. So, let us scrape off the rust on efficient business practices with these short steps:

1. Writing Tight Contracts
2. Working with High Percentage-Close Buyers
3. Working with Motivated Sellers
4. Listing Maintenance
5. Budgeting and Cost Control.

Clients with a real reason to buy or sell put up with sacrifices necessitated by slower markets. When people are screaming to buy and sell, real estate agents do the only possible thing, which was to throw as much business on the wall as possible and hope that it stuck. Newer agents became jaded due to the amount of market enthusiasm. Older agents let go of some of their good habits. Let us go over each of these and tighten up practices for a more normal market.

1. Writing a tighter contract simply means that I would much rather have a purchase agreement fall apart early in the process than later. The best way to illustrate this is a practice that I implemented for the last twenty-five years of my real estate career -- I would simply COUNTER EVERY OFFER. I know what you are saying – "Walter, you rejected every offer that came to you." In essence, that is what I mean however, a motivated buyer will not let that happen.

Let's say that I am the listing agent, and Agent Nancy Nice brings me an offer. I learned long ago that it is not my job to negotiate the last few thousand dollars for either my buyer or seller. With the offer being close enough, I intelligently remind the seller of the goals that they want to accomplish and that this price will allow them to achieve those goals. I tried to support the incoming cooperative agent's price if it was close and would eventually achieve my seller's goals. However, I did this with a condition in mind -- SURETY OF CLOSE.

By having surety of close, I had created a greater chance of a sold property at the time of the contract signing. By countering the offer, I also eliminated buyer's remorse, which is running rampant in this market as they read national news articles about bubbles bursting. When you accept an offer "as is," the conversation in the buyer's kitchen that night is that too much has been paid and renegotiating for the next sixty day closing period is the order of the day.

Here was my checklist for countering every offer. I utilized these tools with the hope that if I was able to get the buyer their price or close to their price, and the balance of these changes are so minuscule in nature that the buyer will accept the offer.

If they don't accept the counter offer, the buyer has shown their hand as a weak, wimpy, time-wasting weenie head. The counter offer would go to every cooperative agent's buyer who brought me an offer:

- a. I increased their deposit. Who trained real estate agents on small deposits? If someone is putting down a large down payment, let us get a piece of that to hold the property off the market during the closing period. Big deposits make buyers pay attention.
- b. I shortened the contingency periods. It does not take the home inspector a week to meander out to the property, if you are giving one home inspector all your business. Remember to be loyal to your affiliates and get better service. With his tablet PC, I could have the report from the location and get approval in forty-eight hours.
- c. I dotted the "I's" and crossed the "T's" especially with newer agents. Ambiguity in a contract early on grows to destructive contracts later on. Go into closing with a complete contract.
- d. I tried to get out of personal property negotiations. I was not put on this earth to sell dinette sets. Most of this silliness can be eliminated at the listing presentation.
- e. I countered for my affiliates by using similar clauses like, "Buyer to be pre-qualified by Steve Johnson at XYZ Mortgage. After pre-approval, buyer is free to use any lender of their choice." This counter offer is not only innocuous but also important to get a trusted team member into a position of power and leadership. Because he is good, the buyers end up thanking you!
- f. I shortened the closing period. Who has the rule that real estate agents must have thirty or sixty-day closing periods? What if you have a vacant home and a buyer living above his parent's garage? Your lender can close in less than a week.

Writing tighter contracts ensures that you have a higher closing percentage with fewer problems during the pending process, happier sellers, and buyers who have less wiggle room in a negative news market.

2. **Working with buyers of a higher closing percentage only ensures that you are not wasting your time.** Proving that a buyer is motivated can be tricky so I used the following standard: "If a buyer does not cooperate with systems put into place for their own good, they are probably an energy-wasting wobbler."

I requested that my buyers answer approximately thirty-five questions at the time of the initial phone interview. I would then tell them about my lender team member and the wonderful programs they have. I would E-mail the completed questionnaire to that lender, have the lender call the buyer, give me a third-party endorsement, and pre-approve the buyer. I requested that the buyer come to my office for safety's sake and also another proof of motivation. Fourth, I would have them sign a loyalty agreement, based upon my amazing service and my ability to find inventory that no one else will be able to find them through old expireds, FSBOs, office pocket listings, foreclosures, short pays, a direct mail program sent to the area of their interest, and seven other unique inventory acquisition methods other than just the MLS.

By having the buyer jump through these hoops, you will find that only the most motivated, honest, and enthusiastic buyers will complete the process. All others will be referred to someone else in the office for customer satisfaction. In this market, it should be your goal to eliminate 75 to 80% of all buyer leads and have a 95% closing ratio on the balance. You cannot work with under-motivated buyers when they are being bombarded with horror stories of depreciation across the nation. This buyer system is also one of my finest seller lead generation systems.

3. **You might think that any one who wants to sell is a great lead; however, this is not true.** Many sellers do not have a good reason to sell therefore will not have the fortitude to be flexible enough to be successful in this market. My sellers were put through a laborious pre-counseling process on the phone, prior to the listing presentation. These questions allowed me to make a determination whether or not they had what it takes to sell in this market. The majority of the questions stem from motivation. The main question is "Why do you want to sell?" Obviously, this small question is important, and it might take as many as five requests for an honest answer. If the client cannot tell you exactly why they want to sell and have no good reasons for it, it is a good indicator that you are going to have motivational problems. Have the seller be realistic about the property pricing and what it takes to get a property sold in this market. In this market, the agent who knows the most about the seller wins. That should be accomplished prior to the time-consuming and expensive research, travel, and presentation appointment. This is why I was so aggressive in putting together numerous pro-active seller lead generation systems so that I produced more leads than other real estate agents. This way it is much easier to find the most motivated sellers. Because of the amount of leads that I generated I was less likely to take a seller out of desperation who did not have what it takes to compete in a tougher market.

4. **Listing maintenance does not mean waiting for something to happen in a hot market.** It is not a hot market in many areas so do not make your sellers loath the fact that you set up parameters at the listing presentation. "One of my systems that I am most proud of at Sanford Systems is my feedback/goal realignment system. I will personally be in contact at least every ten working days to compare your property to the current market, providing feedback and adjusting activities."

Now you can rest assured that you are in contact with your sellers enough when there are no showings and no reasons to contact them. As your inventory grows to fifty listings, all you have to do is contact five upset sellers a day. This is a task that you can easily swallow in a tough market.

5. **Go ahead – no excuses!** Cut your expenses by 20%! In a tough market, that might mean staff, contracts, perks, supplies, and the need to re-align advertising to get more bang for the buck.

When you work my business plan of generating seller leads and taking away the most motivated sellers, then counter all incoming contracts to eliminate buyer's remorse while making the contracts more bullet-proof, and finally work with the buyers who jump through all the hoops, you will find that the amount of fall outs you have due to negative press and time wasted dealing with spooked clients is greatly lessened. In fact, in these markets, agents not adhering to the above rules usually get out of the market faster than the market goes down. In similar markets, I found myself with less competition and more money.

As we always preach, more money means a greater ability to buy the world's best investment product toward the bottom of a market lull. Tighten up your practices, batten down the hatches, work with better clients, strengthen your practices and make more money in this market.

Walter Sanford was one of the top real estate agents in North America for nearly thirty years, and now, he is one of the most requested speakers, trainers, and coaches. He has authored twelve systems and books on checklists, pro-active lead generation, affiliate lead generation, plus others mentioned in this article. You can hire Walter or buy his products by visiting his website for more details at www.waltersanford.com, by calling 815-929-9258, or emailing Walter at walter@waltersanford.com.

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