

Verna's Marketing

"I do not market property like the average REALTOR®; but then, no one has ever accused me of being average!"

Effective marketing takes more than the "3P method:" Put a sign on the property; Place an ad in the paper; and Pray. If that were all that was needed, being a REALTOR® would not be much of a profession. The owner can do that much without paying a lot of money to have it done for them. Successful marketing depends upon a blend of print advertising, networking with other agents, aggressive buyer-follow-up; multi-media promotion and effective sales and negotiation skills. Every real estate professional should be able to detail their program, your individual sales strategy for target marketing and just how it will all work for you.



Verna Acker, CRS

Technically Speaking..... A Comprehensive & Marketing Program

A marketing program begins at the signing of the contract.

Our property info sheet is comprehensive and attractive. This may be the only chance we have to entice the buyer to look at your property. To compare Realtors, call on a couple of homes and ask for them to mail you their property sheet. Judge their commitment to their profession by the quality of their work.

Prospects who have called on other properties are contacted by phone or e-mail within the first week of the listing.

We try to keep our database a current and "living" record. When buyers and sellers stay in touch by responding to our mailers and/or our calls, we direct our attention to their needs regularly. Non-responses from those on our data base are contacted when time permits in an attempt to update the files.

Your first ad is published in the Hi-Liter. The best buyers and the best agents watch for new listings. We picture your property to advantage. "Brand New Listing" is prominent to call special attention.

Your property is advertised somewhere every week. Choices are: The Hi-Liter, The Racine Journal, the Milwaukee Journal, The Standard Press, The Home Buyer,--plus, wherever else seems appropriate. Print ads are designed to

Use of the World Wide Web

Our office leads the industry in this area with effective use of the World Wide Web. We have an active web site:

www.vernacker.com

We also have at this printing, 6 other home pages on other active real estate sites that link back to my web site.

Our photo slide tour is state-of -the-art. All properties can be viewed from all points: interior, exterior and neighborhood at www.vernacker.com As many as 15-25 pictures may be included. This service is provided for ALL of our listings; even vacant land. Our website is advertised nationally, as well as being referenced in all current marketing.

Our corporate site is marketed internationally.. My corporate page links to our local site and the rest of our internet services.

The Racine Journal Times provides a comprehensive directory for our entire area, at racinecounty.com, providing everything from community events to businesses and services. Real estate buyers can access property information from there, too.

Metro Multiple Listing gives minimum information on all homes for sale in eight counties. Go to wihomes.com and realtor.com for this service.

All REALTORS® Are Not Created Equal

QUESTIONS YOU MUST ASK A REALTOR BEFORE YOU LIST

Most of us sell only a small number of homes in our lifetimes. With limited experience in real estate, how are we to be capable of maximizing the profits from our home sale? Many home sellers make the critical mistake of thinking all REALTORS® are the same. They list with the first agent who comes along. Does it make good business sense to put the responsibility of selling your home with someone who has no plans, no market program, little experience in your area and limited qualifications? This special report will educate you with valuable information that will help you make the best decision concerning: *Which real estate agent should you list with?*

Start by doing a few hours of research. Ask around...get to know who has the most signs, ads and marketing material in your neighborhood. Who is the most active agent? Compile a list of agent names and use these questions to help you determine which agent is right for you.

- 1. Could you send me some information about yourself?** You can often get a good idea of which agents are the most professional by looking at their promotional materials. Are their materials professional? How are they going to market your home, if they can't market themselves? Track how long each agent takes to respond to your request and how quickly they follow up. If they don't respond efficiently to your listing requests imagine how they'll handle potential home buyers.
- 2. How many homes have you listed and how many homes have you sold in the last six months?**- Look for an agent who has experience with homes similar to yours and is active in my community. If your home has special features, look for an agent with experience in those areas. Your agent should have a good record of selling homes, not just listing them, after all this is your ultimate goal.
- 3. What is your average length of time from listed to sold?** - After you know how many homes the agent has sold ask: How often are price reductions necessary? What percentage of your listings are reduced before they sell? How long are your listings on the market? How close to asking are their sales? An agent who sells close to the asking price *and* quickly is effective at helping clients determine the right price and helping them get it.
- 4. How long have you been in business and to which professional organizations do you belong?**-The length of time a real estate agent has been licensed is not a sure fire sign that they've been an active seller. They may have been in business for 10 years but only part time, whereas an agent who's been in business for 2 years may be a real top producer. So take into account what professional organizations they belong to. The minimum should be a licensed professional who's a member of the local real estate board and multiple listing service as well as the state and National Association of Realtors. Local community groups and associations are also pluses in terms of networking and commitment.
- 5. Has the agent sought the education of professional designations?:** Seller and Buyers should insist on a least a GRI (Graduate Realtors Institute) designation and ideally the CRS (Certified Residential Specialist) designation. This extra education signifies the agent's commitments to excellent in the profession.
- 6. Do you have an assistant or support staff?** By employing someone to handle the details of

Choosing can be Confusing

their business the agent can spend more time servicing your needs. However, make sure you know how much time an agent will spend and how much time their assistant will spend on the sale of your home. It may be fine if the assistant does most of the legwork as long as the agent is there at the most critical times of the transaction period.

- 7. How often will you hold open houses? Will they be public or by appointment only?** Simply putting a sign on your lawn and holding open houses every Sunday will not sell your home. Too frequently, open houses make the property a target for low ball bidders. Look for an agent with a specific plan for each showing. The plan should be just one facet of a complete marketing plan.

What listing price do you recommend and what is that price based on? Pricing is the most critical step to selling your home. Take great care in choosing an agent with the knowledge to price your home effectively. Keep in mind the selling price should attract prospective buyers to your home, get you top dollar in the current market and reflect the condition of your home. Be realistic and avoid

Your choice of a real estate agent is extremely important. Agents are not created equal, anymore than doctors, dentists or hair-dressers are equal. Working with the agent who picks up the phone when you call in is a poor way to choose the person who is going to help with something as important as buying or selling a home or other property. Whether a franchise sells a home a minute or whether they are the largest home seller in the state is not as important as the quality of the agent asking for your business.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Realty Executives has more signs in this community than any other company. As a result, buyers often call our office to find out what is on the market because they have confidence in our knowledge of this market, even if they don't see what they want. Our signage has been respected in this area since 1986. A real estate company is only as effective as the agent asking for your business. Choose your Realtor by credentials and commitment.

8. Yes" agents, who will say 'yes' to any request or price while your home languishes on the market. "Lowball" agents will try to talk you into an artificial price to simply sell as fast as possible. "Highball" agents can be more interested in their interests than yours. Their sign on your lawn generates business for them.
9. **What does the listing agreement entail, what are the beginning and expiration dates, and what are the fee amounts I will be paying?** - Have your agent go over every detail in the listing agreement with you until you understand it completely. Make sure the beginning and ending dates are on the agreement. A good standard for length is six months. Know exactly what fees you will be paying, and remember less is not always better. If the agent discounts their regular fee you can assume it will be reflected in the amount of time and effort and money that is spent marketing your home. If the agent reduces their commission to get the listing it may mean they intend to spend less time and money promoting your property. Any contracted service provider charges according to their perception of their value to the client. NOTE: Because a listing contract is a service contract it is revocable with rights remaining for both parties; consult your attorney.
10. **What disclosure laws apply to me.** Is your agent well-schooled in the disclosures that pertain to your property? Does the agent have extensive experience in your area? Do they know about such things as: Shoreland regulations, Primary Environmental Corridor, Riparian rights, comprehensive condition reports, environmental concerns, non-conforming well systems, local title concerns, local assessment concerns, building guidelines, zoning restrictions, pathways to pursue variances, etc. Your agent should be able to handle these items and know how to pursue situations that arise.
11. **What other services do you provide beyond customary advertising, a sign and the Multiple Listing Service?** Multiple mediums for marketing are necessary in today's world. Buyers may not own a computer, or, they may be technical "geeks." The market program must include "something for everyone:" Effective print marketing, attractive majority signage in the area; toll-free, 24 hr interactive phone service; a personal website that is informative and easy to navigate, multiple web pages to insure that all computer-driven buyers can find your property, an effective presence on all major real estate web sites, and effective multi-photo tour of every property. Note: We include ALL of these services at no additional charge.
12. **Beyond marketing - who handles the inquiry "lead" calls on your property?** Does your agent's team get the calls or do they go to other agents who are "on the phone" who may not know your property or may have other listings they prefer to show. To market effectively in this technological era requires progressive strategies that add value and service to both buyers and sellers!
13. **Show me your website.** Any agent who is committed to their profession will be committed to the benefits of today's high technology. The fee you pay should entitle you to every possible facet of a complete market plan and full service to your property and to you.

www.vernacker.com

Special Services

The 800 Powerline provides, in my opinion, our most effective marketing service. Many real estate companies provide a recorded property description service. This 24-hour service is different. When a prospect calls the service from a touch-tone phone, a 45-60 second recording describes the property. Our service alerts us with the phone number of the caller and the property they have accessed. The caller has the option of leaving a voice mail message, accessing our office without a toll charge or requesting an instant fax of the property information sheets. Unlike Talking House and normal recording services, our 800 line pro-

vides the phone number of callers, tracks which ad medium generates the call and helps us to track all callers and the effectiveness of our marketing program.

Direct mail is another effective part of our comprehensive marketing plan. We have a data base that goes out to other cooperating brokers. We direct mail our properties and MLS properties to buyer prospects, too. Our direct-mail program uses the e-mail alternative whenever possible. We mail our special property sheets to out-of-area brokers if the home has not sold in a reasonable length of time. We direct mail our listings and MLS properties to buyer prospects through our e-mail newsletter and the US mail.



Ask For A Detailed Marketing Plan

- A step by step plan of the first 4 weeks, 8 weeks and 12 weeks your home will be on the market. Make sure your agent is utilizing the latest innovative technologies for generating sales leads...there are ways to, literally, generate leads 24 hours a day! These new marketing tools will help sell your home faster and for more money!

Establish a time with your agent to go over the marketing results within the first 15 days. Ask for all showings and feedback from other agents. Help the agent understand that any news is good even if it's bad because it helps you make adjustments in your marketing plan.

REAL ESTATE CHECKLIST



Company Name: _____

Agent Name: _____

- Agent has the REALTOR® designation Yes No
- Is a Certified Residential Specialist CRS Yes No
- Is part of the Metro MLS System Yes No
- Has a notebook computer Yes No
- Has office based technology to create color home brochure Yes No
- Has a personal home page identity Yes No
- Has a written commitment for customers/clients Yes No
- Has a written marketing plan Yes No
- Has written credentials Yes No
- Can provide up-to-date statistics for personal production Yes No
- Offers a Home Warranty Yes No
- Is a member of a referral network Yes No
- Has national web presence Yes No
- Is a member of local Chamber of Commerce Yes No
- Has strong local image Yes No
- Has sold majority of homes in my community Yes No
- Can provide written record of listings & sales. Yes No
- Advertises regularly Yes No
 - Standard Press Yes No
 - Hi Liter Yes No
 - Racine Journal Times Yes No
 - Milwaukee Journal Yes No
 - The HomeBuyer Magazine Yes No
- Has direct mail database: Yes No
 - 200+ cooperating agents Yes No
- Has a past business database for regular mailings Yes No
- Has a personal support staff Yes No
- Is a full time agent with no "other job". Yes No
- Can provide career production record Yes No
- Knows their percentage of sales in this community Yes No
- Knows their record of list price to sale price Yes No
- Knows MLS average days on market Yes No
- Knows their own average days on market Yes No
- Has achievement & production awards. Yes No
- Has the agent provided a well researched written market analysis. Yes No
- Has the agent explained the whole process from beginning through the closing? Yes No
- Do you believe this is the best agent in the business to work for you Yes No

The top agents in your area should be able to answer all of these questions. Top agents will have their own *personal* web site. Ask them for their address and take the time to look at their site. Don't be fooled by the *company's* web site. You are dealing with an individual agent, not just the company. A top agent will be computer literate and have multiple resources to market your property or to find you the property you want.

Asking the above questions may make the difference in saving you thousands of dollars as a consumer. Take advantage of working with the best agent in your area.

Call: Verna Acker

REALTY EXECUTIVES Lake & Country

262-534-6436 e-mail: verna@vernacker.com

