

Growing Your Business One Step at a Time By Christy Anderson

Have you ever wondered what sets one real estate professional apart from all the rest? What makes one agent more successful than hundreds of other individuals who work hard to get their real estate license only to fizzle out after a few years in the business? There are probably several answers to these questions; however, two very important and critical steps that all highly successful real estate professionals have in common is first, a strong business plan, and second, the ability to continually implement new and innovative ideas into the way in which they conduct their business.

Brad Korn of Keller Williams Realty in Lee's Summit, Missouri is one agent who understands what it takes to grow a highly successful real estate business. He has built a solid business plan, and he continues to educate himself through seminars, educational opportunities and other agents on a regular basis. "Each month I have a goal to implement one or two new ideas into my business in order to continually improve the level of service I provide my clients," explains Brad. "There are so many good ideas when I attend a training class that I have to only focus on the top 3 best ideas. It is absolutely essential to implement at least one of the ideas to get your money's worth and continue to improve and grow as a professional in the business."

As a result of continuously improving his business strategy, Brad has seen his business grow tremendously and he has been recognized as one of the top agent's in his office as well as within the real estate community. Brad has also had the opportunity to speak at various seminars in order to help educate other agents on how they can become successful in the real estate profession.

"My goal as a real estate professional is to be honest and genuine with everyone I come in contact with and to operate my business with the highest degree of integrity. I strive to deliver world class service and build long lasting relationships with everyone I meet!"

One of the reasons Brad chose to work for Keller Williams is because he felt the Keller Williams philosophy on training was right in line with his own personal philosophies. "I believe that if you help others without expecting anything in return, it will come back to you tenfold. The Keller Williams business philosophy truly facilitates the idea of everyone helping each other be successful based on the idea that it will result in greater success for all. For me, I've experienced this personally. I was fortunate to have a broker who believed in me 8 years ago when I moved back to Kansas City and to grow in an office that supported each other and genuinely cared about each other. It was difficult to leave that group, but the business models Keller Williams facilitated a smooth move. Because of my personal experiences, I feel obligated to share my successes and failures with my fellow agents in order to help them learn from my experience, hopefully allowing them to also avoid many pitfalls agents can run into," remarks Brad. "I also feel a certain obligation to share what I've learned with others because most of the systems I have in place were systems I learned from other successful agents."

Brad was not only attracted to the incredible training systems at Keller Williams, but he also liked the fact that the company's movement is directly controlled by its agents through the Agent Leadership Council. Agents work together with owners, and all have an equal vote in determining how a particular office will be run.

The company also offers profit sharing, which is a unique benefit unlike any other in the industry. Through profit sharing, agents receive what could be classified as a type of built in retirement plan that

can produce residual income for an agent who has worked hard for many years.

“Profit sharing is a wonderful tool, and since everyone wins when the office is profitable, both agents and owners are equally motivated to work closely to ensure that the office is as efficient and profitable as possible.”

“The biggest challenge I ran into, before coming to Keller Williams, is that although I was continually selling more homes each year, reaching a very high sales volume, I was having an extremely hard time maintaining profitability. With the Keller Williams system, every person in the office wants you to be profitable, because if you are profitable, they also benefit. This encourages everyone to help each other stay on track.”

The company of Keller Williams itself started franchising in 1991. It has grown to over 222 offices in the United States and Canada, with over 15,000 sales associates and a 40% annual growth rate. “We are still in the beginning stages of what our company will become and the opportunities available to those who help grow the company are endless.”

Brad not only has the support of a solid company, but he has a wonderful team of highly motivated and professional agents and support staff who help him provide outstanding service to his clients. “I have an incredible team of agents who ensure that each transaction is completed smoothly. We also do not consider ourselves ‘sales people’ but rather consultants. We provide all of the information necessary for our clients to make an informed decision, and then assist them through the steps necessary to make their desires a reality.”

“My team and I do not consider ourselves sales people, but rather, consultants who provide information to enable our clients to make informed decisions.”

Brad feels strongly that he could not have reached the level of success he has achieved today if it were not for the support of his team. “Sonya is our team’s office manager, and she is also my wife and life long partner. She processes contracts, manages the business’s money flow, and makes sure everyone stays on track to sell enough real estate to reach our goals and pay all our expenses. Angela Earhart is one of three Buyer Partners in our group, and she also assists in the office fielding our 24-hour hotline, making follow-up calls on feedback sheets, marketing to agents, and showing and selling homes. Shea Painter and Jen Owens are our team’s two additional Buyer Partners. They handle lead calls and are responsible for converting buyer prospects into sales. Our final team member is Lori Smith. She is our Marketing Specialist, and she is basically responsible for ensuring that our listings ‘stand out’ in the marketplace. She also handles taking interior photos, virtual tours, home measurements, creates brochures and flyers, and maintains accurate, up to date information on our Internet site, www.kornteam.com, which was chosen in 2002 as one of the Top 10 most profitable websites by Realtor Magazine.”

“Our goal as a team is to convert at least two new buyers from every listing. We also hope to provide the type of service that is second to none, knowing that today’s buyers will eventually become tomorrow’s sellers. The National Association of Realtors (NAR) statistics show approximately 73% of all buyers will also be sellers.”

When it comes to Brad’s personal marketing and advertising strategies, the majority of his listings are generated from his 10,000 piece mailer complete with a custom home market analysis for each individual neighborhood.

“We get the majority of our new listings through our monthly mailer; however, most of our buyers come from a variety of sources. Because I have a team whose sole responsibility is to follow-up on buyer calls, we have been very successful at converting buyers from our 24 hour hotline number located on all of our sign riders as well as from home magazine publication inquiries and internet inquiries; however, over 63% of our business comes directly from agent and client referrals.”

Brad also maintains a strong focus on marketing directly to other agents. “NAR statistics show that over 75% of all sales involve agents; so I spend most of my marketing time and dollars marketing directly to other agents and encouraging our seller’s to pay well on the coop commission. We also take an active approach in searching for buyers for our listings by utilizing the ‘prospect match’ feature of the MLS. This feature allows us to obtain a list of any agent who has a buyer that has requested a home like ours. Another direct approach we use is to ensure that our competition, within ten thousand dollars of our price range, knows our listing is out there.”

Brad not only utilizes many direct approaches to finding a buyer for his listings, but he maintains clear lines of communication with his sellers about what exactly they can expect throughout the sales process. “When I first meet with a client, I tell them the truth about what to expect and all of the methods I use to find them a buyer. Most consumers expect newspaper ads and open houses; however, what most of them do not know is that there is only a 2% chance I will find them a buyer through these mediums. We also provide our sellers a marketing report once every two weeks that details what homes have come on the market, what homes have received contracts, the number of showings their home has had along with any feedback. We also have two reports that show the number of people who have listened to our 24 hour recorded message about their home or viewed their home on the Internet.”

Brad’s best advice to other aspiring real estate professionals is that, “no matter what marketing approach you chose, it is imperative that you are consistent with your approach. For example, if you can not afford to do a particular mailing a minimum of six to eight times, than don’t bother implementing that approach until you can afford it. Consistency is key.”

When not working, Brad enjoys spending time with his family taking road trips or just enjoys a day tailgating at a chiefs game or taking his daughters to the ballpark for a Royals game. “I am very blessed to have a beautiful and very supportive wife and four incredible daughters, Lindsay, 12, Allison, 8, Elizabeth, 6, and Savannah, 4. Although I work hard during the week, I make sure I take time out each week to spend with my family. We are active in our church and I know the Lord is leading me and rewards those who do things selflessly and for the good of everyone.”

Through a lot of hard work and a solid foundation on which to build a successful business, Brad Korn has demonstrated what it takes to become a top producing real estate professional. His steadfast ability to put ideas into action, combined with his sincere and caring nature have planted the seeds of success that are now reaping a bountiful harvest.