

BECOME A SPECIALIST!

By Linda Brakeall

In this age of finely tuned niche marketing, I find surprisingly few Realtors® who position themselves as specialists.

Most other professionals position themselves as specialists. Doctors do it. Lawyers do it. Dentists do it. Even chefs, landscapers, decorators and CPA's specialize in one segment of the market that they know inside out. They become a knowledgeable resource and the ultimate expert in their field. And everyone likes to work with an expert.

You are a professional. I'm sure there is something that you do better than most other Realtors®. What is it? And how do you get the word out?

Let's start with "what is it?" Which customers do you like to work with best? When and where are you most effective? Is there a particular area, buyer or price range that you could sell and talk about all day long?

Examples: If you are bi-lingual, you might position yourself as the lender who specializes in the(ethnic) community. Home-buying is tough enough to understand in your native language! If English was not my first language, I'd really appreciate having someone explain things to me in my mother tongue! You might consider compiling a glossary in that language as a resource for your clients.

Do you love working with first time home-buyers? Does that bring out the nurturer, the teacher, the counselor in you? Position yourself as the First Time Home Buyer Specialist! Do you remember getting your first home? I do! And it was tough. No one wanted to take the time to explain all the details to me. There are wonderful booklets available free or close to free from the government's printing office in Pueblo, Colorado. Keep some on hand to enhance your image, and offer helpful information.

Are you really good at government loans or creative financing? That takes a certain amount of experience and expertise that not everyone has. We've all seen perfectly good loans rejected because an amateur didn't know the ropes. And while a lender can back you up -

you have to give him or her something to work with! If you do like the financing angle, that may be an area for you to focus on.

How about working with people with damaged credit? That certainly takes some skill and finesse. I've got friends in lending who just adore putting the pieces of the puzzle together till it looks like a viable loan!

We work together to make it happen. Again, make sure that clients and potential clients understand that what you do is not easy. We're not talking whining but perhaps you've compiled "a 54 item check list to assist your clients in the process of repairing credit and getting a loan." ¾ so that they can actually buy a house.

If nothing comes immediately to mind, you might track your last 50 buyers and see if more than 20% of them had anything in common. It might be a product, it might be a personality type or an occupation. For example, if you find that accountants really enjoy working with you and you serve their needs well, that might be a specialty that you could pursue.

Once you figure out what your specialty is then add that catchy phrase to your business card, write a couple of press releases and start giving talks at civic, social and service clubs to let people know what you do and how good you are.

Now isn't that special?

Linda Brakeall, GRI, CRB, is a nationally recognized expert in sales and marketing for Realtors®. Linda, a Realtor® for 13 years, three of which were as an award winning sales person, spent the next ten years as a manager and corporate trainer. She has been speaking professionally speaking, training and consulting since 1992. Copyright© 2001, Linda Brakeall. All rights reserved. For info about Linda, please contact The Frog Pond Group at 800-704-FROG (3764) or email susie@frogpondgroup.com; <http://www.frogpondgroup.com>.

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