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How To Build A Niche

Life is too short to perfect your weaknesses! Yet, most agents try to service whatever business comes their way. This is a prescription for being very busy but not very productive. When you limit your business to what you love to do, what you do or know best, you'll enjoy your business more, have more time and attract business with less effort.

Here are some questions to ask and examples to focus you on your own opportunities:

- **What segment of your market do you know well?**

Linda Ann Krysl, Re/Max Real Estate Results in Bella Vista, AR lives on a lake and specializes in selling lake homes, using her boat to show properties in their best view.

- **What skills, strengths or past experience will enable you to be the expert?**

Barbara Safran, Re/Max Accord in Contra Costa, CA specializes in first-time buyers and sellers, and says her license in clinical social work helps in understanding people and issues!

- **What segment of the market knows you best?**

Mandy Seigler, Athens, GA sold over 20 condos in the last two years in just one building. She built her name awareness through a regular postcard campaign and then did a great job for her clients, which spawned referrals.

Kimberle Woodland, Amerivest Realty in Naples, FL has development good relations with the condo management companies to make the sales go smoother and does 80 percent of her business in this niche.

- **Do you know a type of home, such as historical, or new home construction, or vacation homes better than anyone else?**

Brian and Leslie Rouda Smith, Ellen Terry Realtors in Dallas, TX specialize in ranch and country properties and provide an award-winning Website to support the ease of information gathering for clients and potential clients.

Carol Yates and Kirsten Stensrude, ERA Faust Realty Group in Naples, FL specialize in manufactured homes, knowing the special financing required.

- **What hobbies, passions or interests do you enjoy?**

The love of golf and living in a home on the course is a passion for Linda Soesbe, McGinnis GMAC Colorado Springs, CO. Over 90 percent of her business is in new home golf communities.

- **What future trends are presenting opportunities in your marketplace?**

The globalization trend is the wave that Carla Bonten, Carla Bonten Realty Inc. -- aka "The European Connection" -- of Bonita Springs, FL is positioned perfectly to catch as she and her office serve the needs of clients from all over the world. Her business is 45 percent foreign and she says, "Most of my agents are multilingual -- together we speak 14 languages and dialects."

- **What do you love?**

Are you a tennis player or a great cook? Do you ride a Harley or love to read? Your interests can bring you into contact with others who feel comfortable with you because of the shared interests. How can you increase the time you spend enjoying your hobby and increase your exposure?

- **Where are your best niches?**

Thoughtful niche strategizing includes alliances with partners and services that appeal to the consumer's needs. The time and creativity invested in extras differentiate and establishes you as an expert. Offer a package of services and use partners to create value that no one else offers. Partner with the Harley Davidson Dealership, if riding a Harley is your niche. For her golf course properties niche, Sosebe supplies "a customized marketing service plan before, during and after the sale, plus a rewards program and special concierge services."

Where could you expand a niche that you already work or create a new one? Sometimes, the niche finds you -- a certain type buyer or property keeps showing up in your closed files. Pay attention to this. It indicates an area that you naturally do well and could probably leverage and expand.

Lisa Levison, Re/Max Solutions, Tampa, FL made over \$100,000 last year specializing in the first-time homebuyers others didn't want to mess with who were looking mostly for properties under \$100,000. This niche chose her, she says. Her familiarity with special purchasing programs and her patience in educating these folks are her unique skills.

You, too, are unique. No one has the same interests, background or set of skills that you have. People like to do business with upbeat, happy people, who are genuinely authentic.

Practice being obvious and have fun enjoying what you like at the same time. It's the best of both worlds.

Written by Joeann Fossland

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