

GET A GOOD “VIDEO” OF YOURSELF—HOW TO ANALYZE YOUR BUSINESS

A friend of mine recently saw herself on a video. While watching it, she exclaimed out loud, “Is that *me*? I don’t look like that, do I? Wow! I wasn’t aware that’s the way I walk and talk. I really carry myself well, don’t I?”

While this may be the opposite reaction most of us have when we see ourselves on video, there is a point to be learned here. We are so busy viewing the world and taking daily actions through our own eyes that we fail to see things about ourselves that others see.

The same is true for our businesses. We are, in many ways, too close to our own businesses because we’re *in* them. Of course, we have no choice but to be in them. But to stay successful, sometimes we need to take a “video” of sorts from an outside perspective to create an accurate picture of what we do.

When I’m doing a business analysis for an agent or a broker or a business owner, I love showing them exactly what’s working -- and what’s not. In almost every one I do, there is *something*—a perception, a process, or a way of doing business—that usually surprises them because they had no idea it was happening.

It’s an odd phenomenon that the things that are closest to us—right in front of our eyes—are the ones we have so much difficulty noticing.

My friend who saw herself on video knows she is attractive and carries herself well, but when she actually saw herself from another person’s viewpoint on the video, the picture was different than the one she had in her head—*because in order to see the “Big Picture” you need another viewpoint.*

One way we often miss the obvious is by not consulting the people who are experts on our business—our clients. Who better to ask than someone who has actually been through your sales process? In my experience, the most powerful business-changing ideas have come directly from my speaking with the clients of the agents or brokers or business owners that I interview.

When was the last time you sent out a survey to your past clients? A survey is a great way to not only find out what needs work, but also what you’re doing right. Make it detailed. Don’t be afraid of the answer and allow people to be anonymous so that they can freely respond without worrying about hurting your feelings.

Many agents or brokers dread hearing about something they did wrong. Don’t think that way. We all do wrong things every day. It’s better we know what they are so we know what to stop doing.

So let’s say you can’t afford a Denise Lones Business Analysis. How can you go about analyzing your own business for yourself?

First, you need to look at your history and track record. If you are producing at the same level (gross commission dollars) as last year, then you are missing one of three components:

- A. You’re not following up with your PAST clients.
- B. Your service skills for your PRESENT clients are weak.
- C. You’re not very good at cultivating new (FUTURE) business.

Take a good hard look at what you’re doing for A, B, and C—and be brutally honest with yourself! Are you only helping B and ignoring A and C? Maybe you’re stuck in A, and neglecting B and C.

Bottom line, you should be paying equal amounts of attention to A, B, and C to maximize your gross commission earnings.

The best solution for A (the past) is to follow up. Always stay in touch with ALL your previous clients—no matter if it's been ten years since they did business with you. For B (the present), look at your personal skills, your current office systems, your contact procedures. How are your present clients responding to you? Maybe you need to boost your negotiation skills. Maybe you need to hire a personal assistant. Maybe you need more education. For C (the future), we come back to marketing. Are you consistently sending out reputation-enhancing material that solidifies you as a community authority on your particular niche?

Another way to analyze your business is not from the money perspective—but from “quality-of-life” perspective. This is the point at which I've arrived in my own business. I'm now looking for ways not to make more money, but to put my business on auto-pilot so I can enjoy what I do but also enjoy my life!!!

Get real about your quality of life. Don't be one of those agents who live in denial about the time they spend on their business. You may think you don't work a lot, but you're checking your e-mail 12 times a day and your phone rings 15 times an hour. When was the last time you took a vacation? Do you have “real-estate-free” days? Truthfully, agents who have “real estate-free” days are more effective, better balanced, and earn higher gross annual commissions.

The final component of analyzing your business—but perhaps the most important—is based in your FUTURE. To borrow a phrase from a 1990s ad campaign:

“Where do YOU want to go?”

You cannot have a successful business—meaning both financially and personally rewarding—if you have not defined exactly where you want to take it. If you're constantly reinventing your business and redefining your goals, you won't stick with any of them. Have a “Mission Statement.” In fact, have several. Write one about what kind of agent you want to be. Write one about how much business you want to do. Write one about how much time you want to take off.

This is essential. These Mission Statements are your road maps—the detailed journey of your success. If you know where you're going, you have an exact destination with a detailed “Trip Ticket” to follow. If you don't, you're a hitchhiker on the road to success, constantly changing directions and never getting anywhere.

So, get out your own “video camera” and take a good long picture of yourself. You may be surprised, but in the end you'll be rewarded.

Denise Lones is the President of the Lones Group Inc, in Bellingham, Washington. The Lones Group is dedicated to helping people find innovative ways to increase their business and still have “a Life”. She draws from her professional and personal experiences and believes that the key to business success is all about people, systems, and follow-through

To book Denise, please call 1-877-211-6472 or visit www.BrokerAgentSpeakers.com.