

“This year, expect a busy summer to follow our slower spring”

Open Houses: The Dying Diamond in Real Estate

The sun is shining, the spring flowers are making way for lush summer foliage, and it's getting hot. Summer is just around the corner.

Summer is traditionally our slower season. But I have a newsflash for you: I predict that this year is going to be busy!

While most real estate agents come out of the gate running in early March, 2007 has provided a bumpy racetrack. The weather created problems—especially the horrible winter we had. For those of you reading this outside of northwest Washington, we had a destructive series of storms that caused major damage to many homes in the area. We had rain and resulting floods. We had winds and power outages. We then had the snowstorms. Some mornings when I was driving to work—or attempting to—I felt like I was in a disaster movie.

But now the skies are sunny, the roads are cleared, and life begins anew. Spring cleaning is in full force, and everybody is landscaping, replacing gutters and roofing, and putting on additions.

With the newfound energy of the change of season, I predict that the doldrums we've been experiencing will be replaced by one of the best summers for real estate in many years. Why? Because everything people had planned to do in the early spring had to be postponed due to fixing the problems created by the winter storms. Spring wasn't cancelled, just delayed.

Everybody who had planned to put their home on the market in March, for example, had to fix the damage caused by the torrential winds in January. Now, they're getting ready to list.

So, this year is a little different. Usually it's the opposite—a busy spring followed by a slower summer. This year, expect a busy summer to follow our slower spring.

With that said, here are the top five things you need to do RIGHT NOW to get yourself ramped up for a busy summer:

1. Clear your head of all negativity.

Get your mind wrapped around the fact it's going to be a great summer. I know this goes against “conventional wisdom.” The media, for example, are continuing their dire predictions based on faulty information. (Don't get me started. You know how I feel about the media at times. Grrrrrr.)

Plus, we are traditionally conditioned to expect the summer to be a slow season. Remind yourself that this year is different. With the proper mental attitude, you'll be prepared for what's coming.

2. Follow-up with your database.

Open up your database. Find everybody who indicated they were “thinking” about a move. Follow-up with them. Ask them what timeframe they had in mind. Let them

know the summer is going to be busier this year, meaning they will have a larger selection of potential buyers than summers of previous years.

If they don't want to commit to a date, then send them a piece of information specifically tailored to a question they ask you. By now, you should have collected many different topics for your clients that address different needs. (If you don't, then check out the articles I provide to real estate agents for this very purpose through my [Safari Club](#).)

3. Preview new listings.

I am constantly stunned and amazed at how many agents do not preview listings. I can't tell you how many times I've heard sellers complain that an agent takes a listing, then disappears.

I also can't tell you how many times sellers have told me that the very reason they choose an agent is the fact that the agent previewed their home when it was first put on the market.

Previewing shows that you are a detail-oriented person who wants to collect every piece of information possible to help your clients. Not previewing a home tells clients the opposite—that you're not interested in them personally, and just want your cut of the eventual sale.

4. Open Houses! Open Houses! Open Houses!

If you know me at all, then you know I'm a huge fan of this old-fashioned technique. Why? Because IT WORKS.

If you don't have an Open House booked every weekend for the next four to six weeks, then pick up the phone right now and set them up! Especially if you need the business.

More than ever before, people are visiting Open Houses. They're realizing that houses are not quite exactly what they seem to be on the Internet. Open Houses were declared dead by several real estate technology "gurus" a few years back, but they couldn't be more wrong.

Houses are never the same when you view them live, and buyers know this. While they do use the Internet to take a virtual tour, they only use this as a blueprint for the real visit.

5. Get an article out to your database immediately talking about why this is such a great time to buy and/or sell.

You need to be the one to tell them that the market isn't crashing. You need to be the one to tell them that the sub-prime scandal isn't affecting the vast majority of real estate transactions. You need to be the one to tell them that there will be more buyers this summer because of the lousy winter.

When you inform your clients, they see you as an expert rather than just another salesperson. Provide details and numbers to them and they will choose you over your competition. You will *STAND OUT*.

With these five summer tactics, you'll be prepared for the busiest summer in years. Let's get the summer kick-started today!

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