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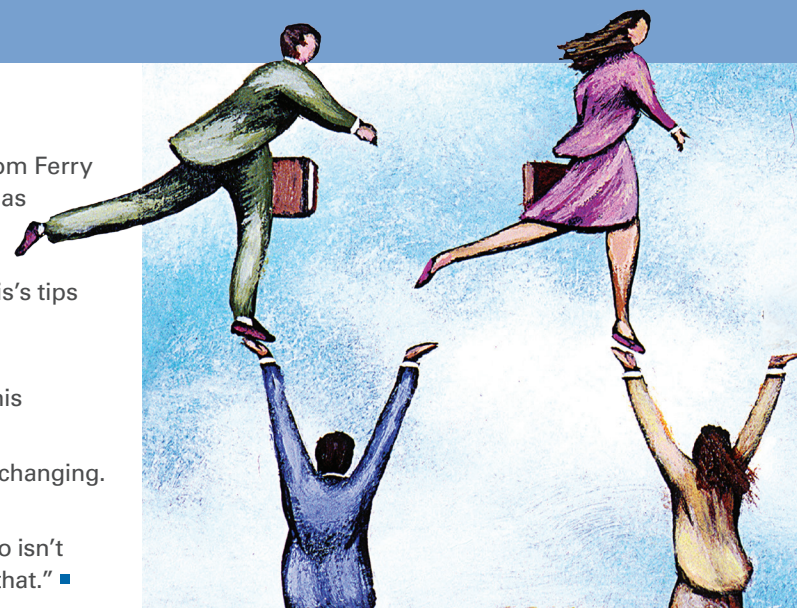
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Smart Tip of the Season

How to Choose a Coach

Award-winning real estate agent Chris Speicher, a client of Tom Ferry (yourcoach.com), says that coaching has changed his life. It has caused him to think like a CEO, understand when to be strategic and when to be tactical, and realize that when you're accountable, anything is doable. Here are three of Chris's tips for choosing a coach:

- **You must trust your coach.** Your coach is your business adviser and without total trust, you won't be confident in his or her guidance.
- **Your coach must keep you relevant.** The market is always changing. Does your coach keep up to keep you successful?
- **Your coach must have experience.** You need someone who isn't reading a script but someone who has "been there, done that." ■



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Brought to you by:

HOW TO SELL 10 HOMES A MONTH

The key to selling 10 homes a month is diversification — having numerous lead-generation and business-building techniques in process at all times.

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Chris Speicher
REALTOR®
The Speicher Group
RE/MAX Realty Centre

That's according to Chris Speicher, co-founder and award-winning REALTOR® of the Speicher Group of RE/MAX Realty Centre, serving the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. With more than 30 years of combined experience, his company, cofounded by his wife, REALTOR® Peggy Lyn Speicher, has brokered over \$100 million in real estate transactions.

Chris, who is also a Zillow agent advisory board member, says to sell 10 homes a month, you should employ and manage at least 10 sources of business. Anything less, and you are not setting yourself up for success. Recently, he shared his secrets for selling 10 homes a month with attendees at a Real Estate Agent Learning webinar, part of Prospect's free continuing education program for agents. Here are some of the tips Chris shared:

Past clients and sphere of influence —

In a world of canned emails, Chris underscores the importance of taking the time to write out a message, even if it's only one or two lines, that addresses the personal relationship

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Big Idea

Generating Leads with 5/5/4

Chris Speicher, co-founder of the Speicher Group, calls Tom Ferry's 5-5-4 strategy his company's biggest business driver. Chris is a client of Tom's coaching services (yourcoach.com).

5-5-4 entails that every day you have five conversations with past clients or from your sphere of influence, five conversations with new contacts, and four lead follow-up conversations. These can include phone calls, text messages, and private messages via social media (e.g., Facebook or LinkedIn).

The step that intimidates real estate agents the most is having five conversations with new contacts each day. It's difficult, says Chris, but when you realize that everyone is a potential client it becomes much easier. For example, Chris says that when they have a listing in a high rise, his wife, Peggy Lyn, who is a company co-founder, will call around to people in the high rise to introduce herself and talk about the listing. She will then ask these new contacts if they have ever entertained selling. Inevitably, somebody will say he or she has, which can lead to a listing appointment.

The four lead follow-up conversations can include potential clients or leads from the Internet (e.g., from Zillow or your website). Chris says that many agents can do one or two of these steps but they often fail to do all three. Pursue this strategy with persistence and you'll find success. ■

HOW TO SELL 10 HOMES A MONTH (continued from page 1)

you have with a person. For example, if there's a car show in town and you know clients who are automobile enthusiasts,

Make it **your goal** to **personalize 10** quick messages to clients **every day**.

send them a quick, personal message, such as a text, about the time and date of the event. Chris's goal is to personalize 10 quick messages to clients every day.

SEO/SEM — Your website is critical to your marketing; therefore, you need to practice search engine optimization and search engine marketing to get people to visit your website. Most important is to understand that your content must position you as a thought leader and area expert. For example, blog about areas within your farm that are in demand and about the weekly free music events at your community park. Chris points out that with Google's latest search engine algorithm updates, the key for higher rankings is producing relevant content that is very specific to today's topics of conversation versus content that is simply keyword dense. Chris also suggests using Google Adwords (google.com/adwords) and other pay-per-click advertising strategies.

Signage — Along with traditional signs put up to advertise homes for sale, Chris's team uses Coming Soon signs and signs that are erected after buyers move in, welcoming them to the neighborhood. Chris says it is important to put as much information as possible on these signs and to keep them up as long as you can.

Business partners — Chris spends a lot of time fostering business relationships with anybody

who he feels can help his company make money, including lenders, title companies, and contractors who work on homes. Chris even invites his business partners to attend regular Speicher Group business meetings to discuss how their relationships can be strengthened.

Social media — Chris hasn't seen a big return on investment regarding a business-to-consumer model for social media. Instead, he invests his time building business-to-business relationships. He uses social media to network with people who are influential in this business, such as business coach Tom Ferry. Chris asks these people to refer the Speicher Group when they know of people who move to the area. Chris says that in 2013 his company will do over \$6 million in referral business, of which he credits a significant portion of that to business-to-business social media networking.

Tracking — The longer you're in business, the more critical tracking becomes, says Chris. His company measures every dollar that goes out the door. He can tell you his cost per lead, cost per close and the rate of return for his investments in golf, dinners and anything else he does with past clients

It's **not** about what **you make**; it's about what **you keep**.

or those in his sphere of influence. Every quarter, Chris reviews the numbers to assess what's working and what's not. Chris abides by the mantra: "It's not about what you make; it's about what you keep."

Internet lead generation — Chris says his company tried Trulia, Realtor.com, and Zillow and meticulously tracked returns. The difficulty in using these sites, says Chris, is that there are many variables within each specific market that could influence the way those sites work and the traffic they

You should **employ** and manage at least **10** sources of **business**.

generate; therefore, it takes persistence in tweaking the system to get it right. Based on tracking information after a six- to 12-month time period, Chris says the company chose Zillow as one of its lead generation tools. One of the most important points regarding lead generation, says Chris, is that the reaction time to an Internet lead needs to be instantaneous. The Speicher Group hired a Client Care Manager whose responsibility is to react to leads within three to five minutes. At this speed, the Client Care Manager will typically contact people generating the leads while they are still on the website. And if you can get a hold of these people while the home search is still top of mind, you're going to be successful. ■

Using Buyers to Get More Listings

With **low home inventory across the country** comes a great opportunity to get more listings. Chris had a buyer who wanted to live in a particular condo community. The buyer wanted a specific plan not on the ground level with a two-car garage. The Speicher Group lost out on the contract they had put in with this buyer, but instead of giving up,

they went into the MLS, pulled up all the tax records, and found residents who had the buyer's particular requests. Chris then drafted a postcard that said he had buyers who wanted to live in the neighborhood and to call if they had any thoughts of selling. Chris ended up listing two homes in that condo complex and was able to put the buyer into a home.

Make Things Happen: Using Zillow for Success

As a longtime user of Zillow and an advisory board member, award-winning REALTOR® Chris Speicher knows how to use this lead generation service for success. Here are his top tips:



- Choose the right audience. For your market, is it first-time homebuyers, move-ups, luxury, etc.
- Choose the right Zip Code. It's not about where you want to work — it's about what will provide the best return on investment.
- Make sure you have a professional photo for advertising.
- Fill out your profile completely. Zillow asks for a lot of information, but it behooves you to be complete.

- Obtain reviews. Getting reviews posted on Zillow is the easiest way to generate leads. The Speicher Group collectively has more than 100 reviews on Zillow. Chris says he gets at least one call each week from potential sellers who state that they saw a review on Zillow that prompted them to call. Chris's team takes 60 seconds at the end of every transaction to ask for a review.

- When a lead comes in, respond immediately. Our standard is three to five minutes. If the lead provides a phone number, call. Don't just email. Texting works well too.
- Follow-up is a long-term play — don't give up. We stay in-touch with leads for at least 18 months. ■

News You Can Use: The Importance of Traditional Farming

Traditional farming still works for a variety of reasons, says Chris Speicher, co-founder of the Speicher Group. In the past several years of a challenging economy and the advent of easier-to-use lead generation 2.0 tools (email marketing, pay-per-click advertising, etc.) many real estate agents stopped farming. The Speicher Group took the opportunity to expand their farming strategy. The result, Chris says, has been a very good return on investment. Here are his tips for farming for success:

Choose the right farm. First and foremost, you need to choose the farm using statistics. You can't choose the farm because you live in the neighborhood, you like the homes or it has a high price point. Only farm an area that has a 5-percent turnover rate year over year (total number of homes divided by the number of sales in the past 12 months); otherwise, walk away, advises Chris.



Choose the right marketing message. When farming neighborhoods, it's not about you, how great you might be or how many homes you have sold. It's about educating and informing potential buyers and sellers and becoming their trusted adviser and information source. Once that's established, they will seek you out. Farming is about giving until you get to the right point to ask for the sale.

Be patient and consistent. Depending on the marketing piece and the call-to-action, expect a 2-percent to 4-percent response rate. However, Chris says that it should increase over time, so the longer you mail, the better. Chris says his company does not farm an area for less than 36 months.

Do what has to be done. If a mailing doesn't get an intended response, Chris says he'll door-knock in that neighborhood to meet the goal of the mailing. ■