

NEW JERSEY REALTOR®

JULY 2016: VOLUME 2, ISSUE 5

CREATE YOUR OWN PATH TO SUCCESS

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Program **P. 10**

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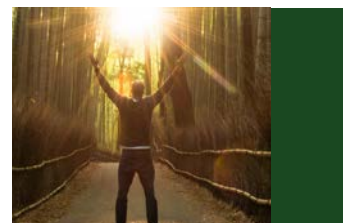
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Independence Day

Summer is here, and with Memorial Day behind us, we have Independence Day on our minds. While fireworks and fun might be top-of-mind, it's also a celebration of our national pride and, ultimately, America stepping out on its own.

As Realtors®, some of us have been in the business for quite some time and are independent and well established. Others are just starting out and need a little assistance to get going.

I remember when I initially received my license and spent those first days in my office with absolutely no idea what I was doing or how to do it. I would go into the office and say to myself, "OK, congratulations. You're here. Now what the heck are you supposed to do?" Yeah, I talk to myself.

Fortunately, I had a wonderful support system of managers and mentors who helped me along the way, and soon I had a better grasp on how to run my days and my business. I also came to learn that I was part of a bigger "Realtor® Family" that, while often competitive, is also cooperative. When we have a transaction with another agent on the other side, even though they may be from another company, we must both succeed in order to complete the transaction.

At last month's hugely successful New Jersey Realtors® Young Professionals Network Night at the Racetrack event, I sat down for a bite to eat at a table with a few people that I did not know. We started talking and one of the young women indicated she was fairly new in the business and having trouble with a transaction. She explained the situation and four complete strangers around the table gave her advice, guidance, and encouragement.

The beauty of our industry is that we have so many members with varying backgrounds and experiences. Whether you are young or old, just received your license or are a member of the NJ Realtors® Quarter Century Club — we all have something to offer and something to learn.

My hope is one day that young woman from the YPN event will sit down at a table with some new agent she's never met and be able to help them through an unknown situation. That's how we all keep achieving our own Independence Day. ■

Tg Glazer
PRESIDENT





A New Beginning

This month marks a momentous occasion for our association: our new headquarters in Trenton will be opening and we will now have a permanent presence in our state's capital. Mid-month, we will officially make the move and solidify a vision of the association's that has been in the works for years – one that will lead New Jersey Realtors® into the next 100 years of success.

Being in Trenton will give our government affairs department an extra edge – it means that staff can be in the State House networking with officials and lobbying them on important issues at a moment's notice. This additional face time will translate into more protections for the real estate industry, homeowners, and private property owners in New Jersey.

We've also got state-of-the-art meeting spaces, which will make committee meetings more efficient, and will provide room to invite VIPs to private events, furthering our lobbying abilities. With our new media room, we'll be able to create materials to educate and inform members and also lend the space to local boards for their video marketing needs.

In addition to the benefits our members will see, we're also moving into the heart of a redevelopment zone in Trenton, which will spark a renaissance in the area. Already, we know that there are new businesses and new apartments coming into the area. It's exciting to be part of the city's revitalization, which will positively impact its residents, commuters, and the local economy.

We're pleased that our neighborhood includes the headquarters for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Mercer County. With a partnership between Realtor® associations and Boys & Girls Clubs across America this year, it's a happy coincidence that we're taking advantage of. Already this year we've worked with the New Jersey clubs to do summer swim drives and fundraisers to support their incredible programs. Our Housing Opportunity Foundation has a project in the works with the Mercer Club – we'll announce more details in the coming months.

Here's to the future! ■

Jarrold C. Grasso
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER





EVENTS & DEADLINES

JULY 1, 2016 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2016

JULY 4

NJ REALTORS® OFFICE CLOSED — INDEPENDENCE DAY

AUG. 22-23

2016 LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Chicago, Ill.

SEPT. 5

NJ REALTORS® OFFICE CLOSED — LABOR DAY

SEPT. 13 11:00 a.m.

NJ REALTORS® EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Edison, N.J.

SEPT. 13 1:00 p.m.

NJ REALTORS® BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Edison, N.J.

SEPT. 16

**NJ REALTORS® GOOD NEIGHBOR AWARD
APPLICATION DUE**

njrealtor.com/membership/awards

OCT. 3

**NJ REALTORS® CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE RPAC
INVESTMENT DEADLINE**

njrealtor.com/account



BOARD / ASSOCIATION NEWS

Realtors® Care in Paterson

The Passaic County Board of Realtors®, in cooperation with the New Jersey Realtors® Housing Opportunity Foundation, held its first Realtors® Care Day on Thursday, May 26. Members were able to help a local family clean, repair, and beautify a home on East 23rd Street in Paterson.





Update From Around the State

By Douglas M. Tomson

In the beginning of the year, we made a conscious effort to become more involved with the local boards' government affairs needs. We dedicated one government affairs staff member to each board so they could play a stronger role in supporting issues that impact you on the municipal, county, and regional levels.

This is only a small sampling of what has been accomplished — make sure to read the August edition of *New Jersey Realtor*® for our annual government affairs-focused issue.

Atlantic City and County Board of Realtors®

On May 19, Atlantic City and County Board of Realtors® held a new member orientation, where NJ Realtors® Grassroots and Legislative Affairs Coordinator, Catherine Best, attended to educate new members on the ways Realtors® have been able to positively affect and protect the real estate industry through government affairs initiatives and campaigns.

Burlington Camden County Association of Realtors®

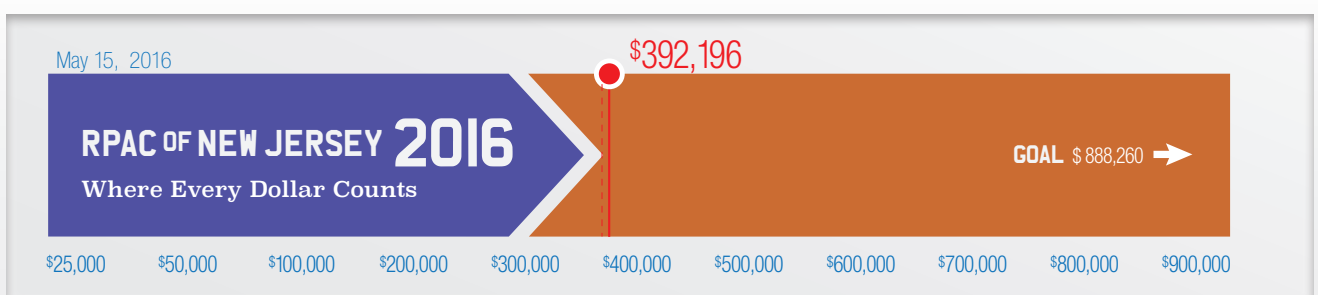
During their Feb. 2 legislative committee meeting, Burlington Camden County Association of Realtors® discussed a variety of important government-related topics, including the permit extensions act, legislative priorities, and arranging congressional meetings to further champion for the real estate industry.

Gloucester Salem Counties Board of Realtors®

On June 7, a NAR placemaking grant application for \$2,700 was awarded to the Gloucester Salem Counties Board of Realtors®. The grant monies will be used to assist the Salem Main Street organization with their alleyway activation project to help revitalize its downtown area.

Mercer County Association of Realtors®

The Mercer County Association of Realtors® met with Mayor Eric Jackson of Trenton on April 18 to discuss the city's vacant property registration initiative and landlord registration requirements.



Monmouth County Association of Realtors®

On Feb. 29, the Monmouth County Association of Realtors® held a presentation for members to better understand issues affecting real estate at all levels — including seasonal rentals, CO inspections, and the state budget — and how investments in RPAC relate to these issues.

North Central Jersey Association of Realtors®

On Jan. 22, a presentation was given to the North Central Jersey Association of Realtors® highlighting examples of what RPAC investments have done for Realtors® in the area and also reaffirming continued support for the PAC in order to advance the industry's needs.

Ocean County Board of Realtors®

On Jan. 21, members from the Ocean County Board of Realtors® met with representatives from Congressman MacArthur's office to discuss the federal Housing for Older Persons Act and its impact in Ocean County.

Passaic County Board of Realtors®

The Passaic County Board of Realtors® held a mayors' luncheon on May 4 with officials from Passaic County. This event provided an opportunity for a local government update and fostered positive discussions between local elected officials and members of the association.

RealSource Association of Realtors®

On May 23, RealSource Association of Realtors® held an impressive RPAC phone-a-friend event. Of the \$600 raised, many of the contributions came from new RPAC investors.

Learn more about this program at njrealtor.com/government-affairs. ■

Douglas M. Tomson is the Director of Government Affairs. He can be reached at 732-494-4720 or dtomson@njrealtor.com.



NEW JERSEY LEGISLATIVE BILLS

A1543 – Peterson (R-23), DeAngelo (D-14)

Authorizes design professionals to self-certify construction plans.

New Jersey Realtors® Position: Support

We support this bill, which creates a program in the Department of Community Affairs that speeds up the permitting process. It allows the state to certify architects and engineers to declare that their permit applications comply with relevant construction codes, laws and ordinances.

Bill History:

1/27/2016 – Introduced in Assembly and referred to Assembly State and Local Government Committee

A1740 – Greenwald (D-6)

Expands applicability of “The Truth-in-Renting Act.”

New Jersey Realtors® Position: Oppose

We oppose this bill that expands the applicability “The Truth-in-Renting Act” to one- and two-family residential properties including owner-occupied homes.

Bill History:

1/27/2016 – Introduced in Assembly and referred to Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee

A2060 – Gusciora (D-15), Sumter (D-35)

Establishes process for consideration of offers from short-sale buyers during residential mortgage foreclosures.

New Jersey Realtors® Position: Support with amendment

We support this bill with an amendment that will ensure there are no abuses relating to fake offers in short-sale situations in order to help speed up the short-sale process.

Bill History:

1/27/2016 – Introduced in Assembly and referred to Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee

5/12/2016 – Reported out of committee, 2nd reading in Assembly



SUPPORT



MONITOR



OPPOSE

CREATE YOUR OWN PATH TO SUCCESS

By Michele Lerner



While statistics vary on how many people opt out of being a Realtor® within a few months or a few years, the consensus is that a certain number (sometimes estimated at 10 to 20 percent or more) of new agents fail. But, more than 75 percent of Realtors® have been in business more than six years, according to the National Association of Realtors® 2015 Member Profile, which clearly shows that success and longevity are attainable in this challenging business.

According to an Inman Select Special Report about new agent onboarding in April 2016, 77 percent of respondents said “new agents fail at least in part because they are unprepared for the realities of working as an independent contractor.”

Christina Weiner, a Realtor® with Weichert Realtors® in Short Hills, who has been successful in her first year as an agent, says setting realistic expectations is essential.

“New agents need to realize they are starting their own business and that they need to make some upfront investments,” says Weiner. “You can’t expect it to support you right away.”

Planning and saving come first

Successful agents have solid business and financial plans, says Roseann Farrow, Realtor® Emeritus, owner of Roseann Farrow Seminars, and a real estate broker in Wallkill, N.Y. She says new agents need to be prepared to sustain themselves for at least two to three months—or longer—without a paycheck.

“One agent knew she couldn’t sustain herself at all without a paycheck so she wrote a business plan and got a bank loan to live on for her first few months,” says Farrow. “That was a huge motivator because she had to earn the money to repay her loan.”

Shawn Anen, a Realtor® with Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty in Wayne, says Realtors® need to be prepared to spend about \$1,500 to get started

in the business and expect to wait at least four to six months to see a return on that investment. He juggled part-time bartending and other jobs for a few months when he first started as an agent to cover his living expenses.

“Before you start out you need to know how much money you need to make per year to avoid being forced to quit and take a different a job,” says Farrow. “You estimate the amount you’ll earn per sale and then you work backwards and figure out how many closings per month it will take to achieve your goal. You also need to determine how many listings you need to get to that number of closings.”

Maryanne Elsaesser, a Realtor® with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Wycoff, says agents who don’t have any savings or financial support from a spouse or family member often drop out of the business because they need a paycheck.

Weiner says agents should start every year with a business plan and an understanding of what sets them apart and what it will take to succeed.

“You need to have a learning mindset,” says Bernice Ross, CEO of RealEstateCoach.com in Austin, Texas. “A lot of agents come in thinking there’s a short-cut to success, especially if they hurried through the licensing classes. New agents need to take the time to learn the inventory in their area, sit at open houses, learn how to evaluate home values, and understand the contract inside and out.”

Personal qualities essential for successful agents

While most Realtors® consider themselves extroverts, there are some specific personality traits that many highly successful agents share: a strong work ethic, discipline, devotion to serving others, fearlessness, and self-confidence.

"I can teach the sales part, so when I am hiring agents I'm looking for people who are aligned with my values and the values of our company," says Susan Norman, branch vice president and managing broker of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Princeton. "I'm looking for people who are honest and who understand customer service. Former teachers and nurses often make good Realtors® because they understand the importance of customer service and know how to work long hours."

Farrow says that many people go into real estate with the idea that it will be a fun career.

"Many people don't realize that being a successful agent takes a lot of work," says Farrow. "You need to be a goal-setter with a great self-motivated work ethic."

At the same time, Farrow says, you have to be able to handle rejection.

"You need to have the self-confidence to sell, a feeling of self-worth, and the feeling that you are offering to help people," says Farrow. "Successful agents see that they are providing services rather than pushing people."

Honesty and putting your customers' needs first are essential to establishing complete trust, says Elsaesser.

"The Realtors® with the most referrals are forthright and fair and don't manipulate anyone to get a deal done," she says. "I never bash other agents in order to get business. It's important to be good to other agents."

Understanding people and how they want to be treated help build a referral-based business, says Elsaesser.

"If someone likes statistics I'll talk to them about the market and give them all the numbers they want," she says. "For people who are more emotional, I'll talk about the beautiful features of a home."

Norman says Realtors® have to be personable and unafraid to get in front of a crowd.

"As a Realtor®, you need to always be positive and always be a problem-solver for your clients," says Norman. "You also need to be able to brush off negative responses, be open to suggestions, and constantly seek out resources that can help your clients."

Coaching, commitment, and consistency

Of course, real estate isn't all about personality. The business requires training, staying on top of trends, and a continued commitment to goal-setting. Ross says agents should find training resources through their local and state Realtor® associations and earn designations to increase their knowledge and reputation.

"As a Realtor®, you always need to have the mentality that you are always the student and never the master," says Weiner. "This business changes rapidly so you need to constantly learn new things. I commit to spending at least two hours every week learning something new such as a Facebook feature or a new part of my contact management program."

Anen, who earned his real estate license when he was 22, convinced his broker to split the fee for a coach after he had been in business just three weeks.

"I am convinced that having a coach is essential to a successful real estate career," he says. "I believe in accountability and consistency. If you forget to keep prospecting consistently you'll end up crashing out of the business."

According to the Inman survey, 47 percent of respondents said training agents in lead generation is critical in their initial training and 38 percent said it's the most important area to work on in ongoing training. "Before you hire a coach you need to know how to do your business," says Ross. "95 percent of people need a trainer, but not necessarily a coach."

Training programs vary from one company to the next, but Farrow says successful agents who have the right attitude will find a way to get trained through their company, a mentor, or their Realtor® association.

Tom Ferry, CEO of Tom Ferry – Your Coach, an International Coaching and Training Company in Irvine, Calif., says that agents succeed when their behavior aligns with their goals.

“Those that win consistently work on their mindset, sales skills, and commitment to giving the consumer an exceptional real estate experience,” he says.

“Agents who work with their manager and a personal coach have the best combination to ensure success.”

Know your business

While having the right attitude and commitment to your customers are important, there’s no question that you need to devote time to maintain and expand your local market acumen. “Knowledge plus passion equals persuasion,” Farrow explains.

“Every agent needs to be ready to answer the question, ‘how’s the market?’ at any moment. You need to have your elevator speech ready and always know the number of homes for sale in your area, the average list-to-sale price, and the average days on the market.”

Elsaesser says her knowledge base includes knowing which towns and homes may require a septic tank replacement so she can prepare buyers and sellers for a potential major expense.

Norman recommends starting small and focusing on one community to grow your reputation and gradually expand your marketing to more locations.

“I was selective at first with my location so while I was learning the business I stuck to Short Hills where I had recently bought a home,” says Weiner.

Time management required for longevity

Staying on top of the market as well as addressing customer needs and marketing requires stellar time management.

“I use my iPhone, MacBook Pro, and iPad to keep everything in my business organized,” says Anen. “I don’t keep a to-do list. Instead, I put everything on my schedule including a ‘build my biz’ recurring appointment for prospecting and follow-up. I even schedule my gym time.”

Norman says customers want to know that their agent is available and constantly working for their interests. Since people want instant communication at all hours, Norman says agents need to be organized and ready to respond to emails at night and early in the morning.

“You need to set aside time for tasks to grow your business,” says Weiner. “Your schedule should include time to make cold calls, to hold open houses, and to preview properties.”

No matter how you plan your time, optimism is an important component of a robust referral business.

“An ‘I can do it’ attitude is essential to success in real estate,” says Farrow. “Knowledge can be taught and skills can be taught, but without the right attitude and the drive to work hard you can’t make it in this business.” ■

Michele Lerner, a freelance writer from Washington, D.C., specializes in real estate-related articles. She can be reached at MVLerner@comcast.net.



REALTOR® OMBUDSMAN PROGRAMS ARE A GREAT SUCCESS!

By Diane K. Disbrow



Realtor® associations across the country have been busy developing and adopting ombudsman programs to meet the National Association of Realtors® requirement to offer the service to their members and consumers.

What is the program?

In its simplest definition, the ombudsman program is informal telephone mediation. In some cases it can address and solve minor complaints from the public. The ombudsman can also solve inter-Realtor® conflicts before they become serious problems. Since some complaints do not allege specific articles of the NAR Code of Ethics, many times they are transactional, technical, and procedural questions that can be addressed by communication. Like a mediator, an ombudsman helps parties find solutions that everyone can be happy with.

In most cases, the designated contact person at the local association listens to the caller's complaint or concerns and then explains the ombudsman service if the complaint meets the association's criteria. The staff person also explains that if the ombudsman service is not successful, the complainant may still file a formal, written ethics complaint. The ombudsman's role is to communicate the concerns of one party to the other and seek a resolution so that a positive relationship between the parties can be restored.

Let's face it—most people don't like conflict, so it's easier for a consumer or Realtor® to contact the local association to vent or voice their concerns than bring the problem up directly with the Realtor® they are upset with. It's so much easier with a neutral person who can be the go-between.

Who are ombudsmen?

Typically, Realtor® associations appoint members who have a certain number of years of real estate

experience, are familiar with the Realtors® Code of Ethics and the professional standards process, have knowledge of their state real estate regulations, are active in the real estate business, and understand current real estate practices. Ombudsmen must be fair and credible, avoid making a judgement of who is right or wrong, and may not give legal advice to any party. Real estate practitioners make wonderful ombudsmen because, by the nature of their business, they are used to negotiating win-win real estate transactions. The same skill set is used in dispute resolution—careful listening, summarizing the situation, determining what is most important to resolve the situation or make everyone satisfied, and working toward that goal.

Simple conflict resolution

It seems that many members of the public are reluctant to file a written ethics complaint because the process is cumbersome and the paperwork is hard to understand. Often times the problem is not a violation of the Realtor® Code of Ethics. If a consumer took the time to file a complaint, he would become frustrated when the grievance committee reviewed and dismissed it as not relating to a violation of one of the articles of the Code. Even Realtors® are often reluctant to file ethics complaints. Many ethics complaints can be averted with enhanced communications and initial problem-solving capacity at the local association level.

Putting it into practice

It's interesting to note that in reality, many associations' staff have been providing services similar to that of an ombudsman for years since they are the first point

of contact when a Realtor® or consumer wants to file a complaint. In many instances, staff is successful in alleviating the concerns, though that isn't always the case.

The term "ombudsman" isn't new in other industries, but this fairly new dispute resolution service in Realtor® associations has been warmly received.

Just like mediation of monetary disputes between Realtors® has been a huge success over the years and mediation is the "preferred dispute resolution" process of the National Association of Realtors®, we'll see the same thing happen as associations adopt and

implement their own ombudsman programs. It's a very positive step in providing an opportunity for the public and our members to resolve disputes without anyone having to file a formal complaint. It helps Realtors® ensure customers and clients continue to have great relationships and a great real estate experience. ■

Diane K. Disbrow, GRI, CRS, CRB, ABR, SFR, RSPS, SFR, SRES, SRS, e-Pro® was the 2015 National Association of Realtors® Professional Standards Committee Chair.



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Energy efficiency is a hot topic these days. Sellers want to make their homes more attractive by being energy efficient, and buyers want to reduce usage and lower their bills. Get familiar with these four smart moves and you'll be well on your way to becoming an energy-efficiency expert for your clients!

1 Keep warm air moving—Your clients can distribute heat more evenly in rooms in the winter by running a ceiling fan in reverse. Recirculating warm air trapped near the ceiling will keep the house warmer.

2 Schedule an annual heating system tune-up—Keeping the heating system tuned up is critical for achieving peak efficiency. Annual tune-ups can reduce energy usage by as much as 10%. It's also a smart idea to get a tune-up right before listing the home, so buyers see the system in its best shape.

3 Install an indirect-fired water heater—Indirect water heaters use the oil boiler as their heat source. For homes that heat with a boiler, this is a great option that cuts water-heating costs significantly during fall and winter.

4 Upgrade to a new energy-efficient system—If the existing system in the home is more than 20 years old, your clients can save big by upgrading to a high-efficiency heating oil system. Average savings can be anywhere from 20% to 30% each year, and in some cases even more!

For more tips and suggestions to help your clients make their homes more energy efficient, visit OilHeatPROS.com/NJ and order our FREE Energy Efficiency Guide today!



15 Minutes Can Make All the Difference

Time is money. And PRO\$ is here to help you make more money in less time. When you or your broker schedule a brief, 15-minute presentation with PRO\$, you'll learn everything you need to secure more listings and close more sales. Our local experts will meet in your office, bring our FREE materials and get you answers to the tough questions that can make or break a deal. Visit OilHeatPROS.com/NJ or contact Susan Janett at sjanett@oilheatpros.com to schedule your presentation today!



PRO\$ Corner

Safe at Home With Oilheat

Recent New Jersey customer research revealed that many buyers, particularly younger ones, have huge misconceptions about the safety of oilheat. The fact is, oil-heated homes are incredibly safe! Keep these points in mind for your clients:

- ✓ **No explosions** – Contrary to what many people believe, heating oil cannot explode. The oil that's stored in a tank is as likely to explode as the water in a swimming pool!
- ✓ **No fire hazard** – Heating oil can't burn in its liquid state. Before combustion can occur, heating oil must be vaporized and turned into a fine mist.
- ✓ **No dangerous surprises** – Oilheat poses a very low risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. If an oil burner malfunctions (usually due to lack of maintenance), the safety devices in the unit will typically shut the furnace off.

For more tips on overcoming buyer misconceptions, visit OilHeatPROS.com/NJ



Paid for by the Fuel Merchants Association of New Jersey and the National Oilheat Research Alliance

BEYOND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

By Amanda Thorogood



Are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest important pillars of marketing for Realtors®? Yes. Is social media marketing your only option in the digital world without breaking the bank? Absolutely not.

Your website

We've evolved into a "need it right now" society and websites allow businesses to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In many ways, having a website and related URL has become just as important as a company's name and logo.

Since many buyers search online at some point during the buying process (90% according to realtor.org), your business will gain visibility simply by having a website. Once it's established, utilize your website as a brochure-of-sorts that lets users learn about you, your services, and expertise. And unlike print ads which can become outdated, you can continually update your website to ensure its relevancy.

User-friendly domain registering and hosting companies like GoDaddy and FatCow offer the

direction and support you need to get started. And now that template-based websites have become prevalent and affordable, it is more feasible than ever for Realtors® to have a strong online presence.

Content marketing

Content marketing is the process of creating and distributing relevant content to attract and engage a desired audience. In residential real estate, this would most likely be buyers and sellers.

What has propelled content marketing as a viable strategy is that it lets the creator reach their audience beyond a tagline or simple call-to-action. As the Content Marketing Institute explains, “Traditional marketing and advertising is telling the world you’re a rock star. Content marketing is showing the world that you are one.”

How do you show the world you’re a real estate rock star? Start by creating content (blog posts, articles, videos, etc.) that addresses some of the common problems or questions your past clients have brought to your attention.

Do you know many first time buyers who are unaware of what PMI is? Or maybe you’ve met sellers who are unfamiliar with the art of decluttering before an open house.

Use the concerns you’ve heard from countless clients as the building blocks for your content marketing campaign. Your content will serve as a first impression for potential clients, and having buyers and sellers turn to you for consistent, reliable content builds trust and portrays you as the expert—or rather, rock star—you are.

Email marketing

Email marketing serves as a quick, cost-effective channel to distribute marketing solutions, and promote your brand.

When it comes to email marketing, heed this warning: Blatant self-promotion isn’t going to garner many clicks. However, an email that contains important news, advice for buyers and sellers, or solutions for your clients will. Be sure to put time and effort into your emails—it will show.

Did you write a recent blog post on how school districts impact resale values? Share that with sellers! Has there been a recent announcement that a new state-of-the-art hospital will be erected in the neighborhood? Let people know! Content like this will help solidify your role as an expert in both real estate and the communities you serve.

Once you have a recipient’s attention with an enticing subject line and supporting content, you should integrate information that reminds them of who you are. This is where links to your current listings, upcoming open house dates, social media pages, client recommendations, and website URLs are most appropriate.

Video marketing

Video marketing has been on an upward trajectory in both popularity and effectiveness for the better part of the decade; and with reason. Video presents the distinct opportunity for companies to create campaigns that are reminiscent of powerful TV commercials, but for a fraction of the cost. It allows you to be as creative, witty, heartfelt, informative, or serious as you’d like your message to be. And with programs that come standard on many computers (such as iMovie), creating, editing, and uploading videos is relatively easy to master. ■

Amanda Thorogood is the marketing coordinator for NJ Realtors®. She can be reached at athorogood@njrealtor.com or 732-494-4706.





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



What are the rules for advertising my business?



When it comes to advertising, the New Jersey Real Estate Commission has full jurisdiction over what you can and cannot say in your advertisements. While the rules are lengthy, it's important to be knowledgeable and well versed in these regulations. You don't want to leave yourself liable, so make sure you know exactly what must be included and what should be left out.

Read the full statute and rules at njrealtor.com/government-affairs/advertising-rules.



I saw another Realtor® using an NJ Realtors® contract. How can I get it?



It's easy! NJ Realtors® provides an entire online forms library with contracts, leases, addendums, and more. You can access this library at njrealtor.com/zipform. So, why should you use these forms? Well, first, they're free! It's a benefit of membership to use everything in the zipForms library. Why make your life harder if you don't have to? Second, it reduces your risk because these forms are prepared, reviewed, and often updated by our attorney. Third, it includes unlimited e-sign and storage, so you can completely manage your transactions online.



There are so many requirements when it comes to CE and ethics, what's the breakdown?



As a Realtor® in New Jersey, you have two main continuing education requirements to fulfill:

A. New Jersey Real Estate Commission Continuing Education Requirements (every 2 years)

Key Facts

- You must complete 12 continuing education credit hours
- At least two hours must be completed in ethics training
- At least six hours must be completed in core topics (ethics included)
- The six remaining hours may be completed in core or elective topics
- Visit the NJ Realtors® Academy of Continuing Education at njrealtorsace.com to find CE courses, see your CE record, print transcripts, and more.

Important Dates:

- April 30, 2017: 2015-17 CE Term closes
- May 1-June 30, 2017: Licensees may submit CE credits, but are subject to a \$200 late fee
- July 1, 2017: New 2017-19 CE Term begins. All licensees who did not renew or submit CE credits may no longer practice real estate until license is reinstated.

B. National Association of Realtors® Quadrennial Ethics Requirement (every 4 years)

- Realtors® are required to complete ethics training of not less than two hours, 30 minutes of instructional time within four-year cycles. The training must meet specific learning objectives and criteria established by the National Association of Realtors®.
- The current four-year cycle will end Dec. 31, 2016.
- Complete the course at njrealtorsace.com.



What are some ways I can refresh my standard listing presentation?



Consider having the following in your quiver of tools and information when giving a listing presentation:

- Specific town housing data (available at njrealtor.com/10k and updated monthly)
- Charts, graphs, and infographic on specific data sets from Realtors® Property Resource (narrpr.com)
- Answers to commonly asked questions, such as “What makes you different from other Realtors®” or “Why should I hire you?”
- Make sure each presentation is personalized to the prospective client — you wouldn't send a generic cover letter for a job you really wanted, so don't present a generic presentation for a listing you really want.
- Highlight your sales history, but also your professional and business history. Did you earn an office award? Do you have a designation or certification that's unique? Let them know — a listing presentation is not the time to be shy.
- If you choose to use any apps or gadgets in your presentation, make sure you are comfortable and familiar with the technology — it will show if you're not.

REALTORS® TAKE ON FEDERAL ISSUES

By Christina Gordillo Farrell

The National Association of Realtors® Legislative Meetings and Trade Expo are a time for members and key legislators to interact, talk important policy, and be present in Washington, D.C. each May.

Our leadership team, members, and staff were able to meet with U.S. Senator Bob Menendez, who has been known to champion many Realtor®-supported issues. This year's conversations focused on how to ensure the National Flood Insurance Program remains solvent and viable while also encouraging more private market insurance companies to write affordable policies for residents.

The association also held congressional meetings with representatives, members, and local board staff. These members of Congress were interested in learning how federal real estate policies impact the market in their congressional districts. With local knowledge of the industry, New Jersey Realtors® assisted representatives in making informed decisions on pending real estate legislation.

New Jersey Realtors® declared support of the "Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act," which makes much needed reforms to the Federal Housing Administration condominium loan program, as well as the federal assisted housing programs and Rural Housing Service loan programs. This act would help seniors looking to downsize, first-time and low-income buyers, and recent graduates who carry student loan debt.

Current FHA condo-lending rules restrict the number of condos available to FHA homebuyers, which limits an affordable choice for many buyers. This Act would change FHA's condo rules by reducing the condo occupancy ratio to 35%, and streamline the condo recertification process. Changes to the processing of rural housing loans will improve access for deserving families, and reforms to





federally-assisted housing programs will ease burdens for landlords and improve access for residents.

Realtors® also discussed the need for the Mortgage Cancellation Debt Relief. In discussions with members of Congress, New Jersey Realtors® pressed for an extension and provided the most up-to-date information on short sales and foreclosures to continue to highlight this as a top priority. The representatives understood the need for this very important tax extender, and were encouraged to support legislation that would provide for future extensions once the current extension expires.



Another area of great importance for Realtors® across the country—and especially in New Jersey—is to preserve the Mortgage Interest Deduction and real estate tax benefits. Members of the congressional delegation agreed these tax benefits were among the top priorities in continuing the nation's economic recovery. Tax benefits such as the MID, 1031 like-kind exchanges, and property tax deductions make private property ownership possible for millions of American families. Realtors® reminded their representatives that 1031's are an important part of the tax code and critical to New Jersey's economy. While tax reform will most likely not be enacted this year, ideas being discussed now by the House and Senate leaders will be the ones in play when political conditions line up in favor of moving tax reform next year.



As a unified Realtor® Party our message is clear when discussing reform measures: Congress must remember to do no harm to the real estate industry. Reform ideas that repeal or weaken homeownership must be rejected, and we will continue to make sure the Realtor® Party message is heard loud and clear from the 1.1 million Realtors® around the nation.



To learn more about federal issues, please visit njrealtor.com/government-affairs/federal-issues or contact Christina Gordillo Farrell in the Government Affairs Department at 732-494-4708. ■



Christina Gordillo Farrell is the Legislative & Political Advocacy Coordinator for NJ Realtors®. She can be reached at cfarrell@njrealtor.com or 732-494-4708.





DON'T CLICK THAT LINK...

By John Shehata

Email has become the most dominant form of business communication with over 100 billion emails sent and received each day.

Throughout the course of the day, you may receive emails from your clients, appraisers, mortgage lenders, attorney, your co-workers, and other sources. It is no surprise that email has also become the number one target for phishing schemes. A phishing scheme is an attempt to acquire sensitive information (usernames, passwords, credit card details, and sometimes even, money) by impersonating a reputable company, organization, or entity.

You may have seen some of these emails in the past, or heard of your friends or co-workers falling prey to these attempts. Some phishing schemes target your email providers, banks, or online payment services. Many of these emails look very real and authentic, so it's important to verify everything before sending sensitive information. Recently, we've heard of people receiving emails allegedly from the Internal Revenue Service, with hackers hoping to gain access to sensitive data. Attackers who broke into TD Ameritrade's database and took 6.3 million email addresses were able to launch a follow-up spear phishing attack asking TD customers to verify their information by logging into their accounts.

Examples

The sender is phishing for your information so they can commit fraud, some common examples may contain text like this:

- "We suspect an unauthorized transaction on your account. To ensure that your account is not compromised, please click the link below and confirm your identity."
- "During our regular verification of accounts, we could not verify your information. Please click here to update and verify your information."
- "Our records indicate that your account was overcharged. You must call us within 7 days to receive your refund."

There are anti-phishing websites which publish exact messages that have been recently circulating the internet, such as FraudWatch International (fraudwatchinternational.com) and Millersmiles (millersmiles.co.uk). Such sites often provide specific details about the particular messages.

How to deal with phishing scams

Your first line of defense is to have a healthy skepticism when you receive emails asking for personal information. If the message appears to be from an organization that you do business with — banks or credit cards, for example — be aware that legitimate companies do not

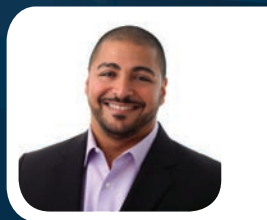
ask for account numbers, passwords, Social Security numbers, etc. via email or text. Delete any email that asks you to confirm personal information.

Do not click reply and do not click any links or call the phone numbers provided in the messages. These links will often direct you to spoof sites — sites that look real but whose purpose is to steal your information.

If you are concerned about your account or need to reach an organization that you do business with, call the number on your financial statements or the back of your credit card.

Report emails that you suspect are phishing emails to spam@uce.gov — and to the company, bank, or organization impersonated in the email. Also let your friends and co-workers know. Often times, people you know will be the target of similar attacks. ■

John Shehata is the Director of Technology. He can be reached at jshehata@njrealtor.com.



Glossary

Phishing - An attempt to acquire sensitive information such as usernames, passwords, and credit card details (and sometimes, indirectly, money), often for malicious reasons, by masquerading as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication.

Spear Phishing - Phishing attempts directed at specific individuals or companies. Attackers may gather personal information about their target to increase their probability of success. This technique is, by far, the most successful on the internet today, accounting for 91% of attacks.

Whaling - A phishing attack directed specifically at senior executives and other high profile targets within businesses. In the case of whaling, the content will be crafted to target upper management and the person's role in the company. Often the content of a whaling attack email is written as a legal subpoena, customer complaint, or executive issue.



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