

Just a New Niche a Year...That's All I Ask!

By Patti Brotherton

You are all prospecting in one form or another and you all know what you need to do in order to get business—that is no secret. Let me share some things that you can add to your current business plan to bring you more business this year and in the coming years. How about expanding your reach by developing a niche market this year?

I need to share that every January I would say to myself, “how can I possibly do the same amount of business as I did last year.” I swear I thought I would never make another sale, and of course, I did do that and more. Why? Because I added something new every year to my prospecting that I didn't do the year before and kept doing all the other things that had become habit and sure enough, I brought in more business. I must admit that when the business got easier because of the amount of prospecting I was doing, I took the summers off to “play” with my kids and I pretty much geared by business to produce an average of 2 sales per week—I ended my last year of sales with 105 transactions working about 45 hours a week, with an assistant who worked for me 4 hours a day, 5 days a week. It was great! This is why I want to share with you that you can make more income by adding some of these sources that are so close, yet you don't think of them.

The key to all prospecting is that you are CONSISTENT. You should not start a program that you will not be carrying out into the years to come. That's just a waste of money. By this I mean, when you get the names from all these different niches, you must be diligent in your on-going follow-up with these people.

Here's a few ways to extend your reach:

1. Best Houses in your neighborhood. Pick out ones you have always admired, make up an award and give it to them. Couple this with asking them if they could be featured in the local newspaper with a picture. Some refuse, but the ones who agree make for wonderful PR for you. It's that simple. One per week. At the end of the year you have 52 fantastic properties that you may list one day.
2. Local Sports Teams. Sponsor them. Put your company name on their shirts, bring bags of peanuts with your card attached to the games, Gatorade for the kids and coaches, and put their picture in the paper with you. Put all the names of the parents and coaches on your mailing list.
3. Local Shop Owners. Contact several of your favorite shops and see if they want to participate in giving your clients a small discount. You print the coupons with their logos. They love it because you introduce more people to their business and they don't have to really have any “out-of-pocket” expense. Put their names on your mailing list.

4. Grocery Store. Pick a market close to your geographical farm and go in and meet every employee. Not only shop there, but let them know your clients do as well. Tell them how much you like the service they give to the neighborhood. Do you think anyone thanks them personally? Give each person two tickets to a local movie theater. Every time you go into the store after that they will call you by name and they will become your biggest fans and supporters. Put their names on your mailing list.
5. Bank Employees. Choose a local bank that is also close to your geographical farm. Get to know everyone. You should have an account there. Again, tell them how much you appreciate doing business there and what a good job they do. Find out everyone's name and call them by name when you go in. Give them two tickets to the local theater. Again, who thanks them? Put them on your mailing list and they will start referring business to you.
6. Doctors. Believe it or not they move around. If you want to add this group, understand how long they are in a hospital, help them with rentals for interns and residents, get all their names. Contact the hospital's human resource department and offer your services in helping their staff find rentals, housing, property management, etc. This is a fabulous source of business.

You get the idea. There are endless ways to add to your business. This year add one thing, and see what happens! At the worst, many more people will know you and eventually you will have more business. Imagine what it will mean to your career adding one new niche a year?!