



# PROSPECTING IN A “DO NOT CALL” WORLD

## *Building Community Presence*

by Howard Brinton

For as long as there have been telephones, real estate agents have depended on them for prospecting. Many agents are now asking, “What am I going to do now, in this world of no-call lists and penalties?”

You still need to get out there and find prospects. The old rule of thumb says to spend an hour each day on prospecting — your “hour of power.” It can produce great returns, so it should still be your goal. However, now agents must spend more of that time on in-person calls and networking.

For example, let’s say you attend two business networking events a week for two hours each, during which you are passing out your cards and meeting new people. On Friday, you spend another hour emailing each new acquaintance to say hello. The week’s total is five hours of prospecting, the equivalent of five daily phone call sessions.

Here are a few ideas for in-person prospecting. As you implement them, ask each new person you meet if you may contact them from time to time about real estate. If they say don’t call, *don’t call*.

- 1. Think numbers.** Work out how many new prospects you want to talk to each week. For example, let’s say you used to try to make 50 cold calls a week, on which you spent several hours in the evenings. Of those calls, you actually spoke to 20 or so live prospects. Instead, try to give your business card to 20 new people each week.
- 2. Make more use of business networks.** That includes Chambers of Commerce and leads groups. Chambers are especially good because they have many networking groups and events that you can attend, bringing you nose-to-nose with people who might need your services.
- 3. Be a Joiner.** Already a member of Chamber or a leads group? Join more. Many real estate agents live in one city but do business in other neighboring cities or suburbs. These smaller suburban groups are often closer knit, and you’ll find it easier to get to know people.
- 4. Give a speech.** If you enjoy public speaking, let your networking groups know. For instance, Chambers of Commerce often host programs on marketing or starting your own small business. Offer to give a 30 minute presentation on one of these topics, based on your own experiences.
- 5. Prospect merchants.** People with whom you do business are great prospects. Tell them what you do and give them your card. While you are at it, stop in on the neighboring shops and talk to the owners there as well.
- 6. Get involved in your community.** Pick projects you really care about, whether it is raising funds for your church, donating time to charity or politicking for your favorite candidate. Aim for leadership roles.
- 7. Explore new social groups.** Your free time can bring you into contact with lots of new people, so here’s your excuse to join that hiking club or singing group. If you exercise alone, consider changing to group activities such as softball or karate.

Just remember to keep up with the new people you meet. Keep notes in your contact management software about their kids’ names, what was discussed, and any results — and always follow up on any requests or leads you receive. It works, and it’s a lot more fun than dial-a-thons.

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