



SHINE BRIGHT

7 BUSINESS PLANNING STRATEGIES THAT WORK

For some real estate sales associates, creating a business plan is like making a New Year's resolution; decide what you want, write out a list, then shove it in a drawer and let life happen. But successful agents, like entrepreneurs in any field, know that having a strategy for building your business is critical – and that accountability is even more critical if you are to meet your goals.

“Believe in the process,” said Jennifer Branchini, a top-performing agent with Better Homes & Gardens Tri-Valley Real Estate in Pleasanton, California. “Working without a plan is like driving without a map when you don’t have a clue where you are.”

For her, it starts with looking at her net profit and what she has to do to beat it – how many listings, how many open houses, how many contracts and closings would it take?

“Statistics say it takes 100 cold calls to make one appointment, and two appointments to make a sale,” she said. “Setting goals tells me what I must do in every 24 hours to make the numbers work.”

There are many business planning tools available from a variety of sources. Simple strategies that may work for you can begin with a few simple steps:

1. **Set the goal** – Write down your net profit goal for the coming year, and how much of that goal would need to be accomplished each month.
2. **List your strengths and shortcomings** – List three of your business strengths, such as persistence, time management, or a wide sphere of influence – and three shortcomings that are dragging you down. Poor social media skills? Inconsistent follow-through? Lacking time management?
3. **Look at usage and remedies** – What do you need to stop doing or start doing more of? Under each skill you listed, note how you can make it work for you, and under each shortcoming, how you might improve it. Do more cold-calling? Take a class? Make better use of your time?
4. **Do the math** – Start with sales volume. How many sales do you want next year? Multiply by two and divide by 40. (20 sales times two is 40, and 40 divided by 40 is one.) That’s how many new clients you need each week to have a shot at achieving your goal.
5. **Set timetables** – Review what you’ve listed and write down how much time each day or week you will set aside to work on improving shortcomings and making best use of your strengths.
6. **Make commitments** – Setting goals is not enough. You must keep yourself accountable. Set aside an hour each week to record and review the number of clients you saw, new listings and/or sales. Compare them against your monthly goals and commit to meeting or exceeding your effort in order to continue gains.
7. **Pat yourself on the back** – As your production begins to increase, focus on what you are doing right. Allow yourself a little insight into what is working, as well as what still needs attention.

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