



SHINE BRIGHT

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE: YOUR TICKET TO RIDE

“You’ve got to expand your sphere of influence!” Is there a real estate agent who hasn’t heard that statement?

You understand that your sphere of influence (SOI) is the very foundation of your career – the core source of business and referrals that will power your long-term success. But how do you begin creating that core, and maximizing its value?

“First, understand you already have a working SOI,” said Kathy Murphy, a top-performing agent with Century 21 Town & Country Real Estate in Royal Oak, Mich. “You have family, friends, former schoolmates and co-workers – people who already know and trust you and would be happy to refer their friends. It isn’t difficult to make new acquaintances and sustainable social contacts you can readily add to that list.”

Murphy suggests starting with: neighbors, your spouse’s friends, your parents’ friends, parents of your children’s friends, your club groups – book club, PTA, church groups, service clubs, etc., groups where you volunteer your time, personal service vendors – your manicurist, barber, dog groomer, gardener, doctor, lawyer, etc.

Strike up a conversation with the person sitting next to you at the coffee counter, in the dentist’s waiting room, at the gym. When you meet a new contact, be sure to exchange business cards whenever possible. “One of the first houses I sold,” Murphy said, “was to someone I met at a Starbucks.” As your contact list grows, it’s time to make it work for you:

- 1. Organize your list** – Categorize your growing SOI contacts, dividing them logically into groups you will market to in specific ways – such as vendors, buyer prospects, seller prospects, business associates and friends.
- 2. Customize your contact methods** – For new prospects, you may want your first contact to be a letter sent with first class postage. For more casual contacts, emails, texts or phone calls may be preferred. Use social media– and remember to add new contacts to your blog or newsletter distribution list.
- 3. Keep your message simple** – No matter the contact method you use, keep your message simple: “I’ve started a new career and wanted to let you know...” or, “I’ve just sold a home in your neighborhood.”
- 4. Set up a contact schedule** – Plan how often you wish to get in touch with your contacts – and stick to it. Family and friends will need less contact, while newer acquaintances should have more. There is nothing worse than learning someone bought a home from another agent because they forgot about the announcement you sent a year ago.
- 5. Find new ways to keep expanding your SOI** – Getting involved in activities you enjoy will increase your chances to network. Join a club. Volunteer. Play in a charity tournament.

And whatever, you do, don’t forget to hand your business card to the guy behind the counter at the dry cleaners.

HELPING YOU SHINE BRIGHT