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NETWORKING TIPS FROM THE FIELD

Networking - defined by Merriam-Webster as 'cultivating productive relationships' - is essential to any business. For real estate professionals, it can mean the difference between a job that goes nowhere and a flourishing career fed by a constant flow of referrals and repeat business.

"People do business with people they like and trust," noted Roger Remington, 2017's Rookie of the Year with Coldwell Banker High Country Realty in the tri-state region of North Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee. "The ability to connect should be in the DNA of any agent, along with a genuine desire to be a vital part of his or her community."

For Remington, who, with his wife has worked with local human services organizations for many years, relating with others who share his passion became a wellspring of new business.

"There are all sorts of ways to expand your SOI while doing something you believe in," he said. "Join the Chamber of Commerce. Volunteer at a homeless shelter - or a youth sports organization - or wherever you feel you can make a difference. The more people who know you, and know what you do for a living, the more you increase the funnel of new business."

Letting people know what you do for a living is key for Jeri Green, a luxury team leader with Prominent Properties Sotheby's International Realty in Tenafly, N.J.

"Networking is single-handedly the biggest source of my business," Green said. "You can't be shy. Exchange a lot of business cards. Speak up everywhere you go about what you do. And listen. That's important too."

Green relates on a national basis via social medias.

"I now have several thousand followers on Instagram and Facebook," she said. "I don't try to sell. I share regional news and tips, and interesting anecdotes related to New Jersey life - and it brings me business, relocation business as well as local referrals." For Jennifer Branchini, a top-producer with Better Homes & Gardens Real Estate in Pleasanton, Calif., creating relationships brings her friendships as well as business.

"I tend to focus more on the agent side," she said. "Getting involved in my local association, in NAR committees, and especially in the Women's Council of Realtors has brought me so many meaningful friendships. It also elevates my professionalism, and the byproduct of that is a constant source of business." Like Remington and Green, Branchini connects through social media and through involvement in community-building organizations.

"Early in my career, I was told by an agent cousin that networking would be the lifeblood of my business," Branchini said. "I don't think I understood it then. But I know now it's more than a source of business. It's brought me friends I will treasure for life."