

Flat Rate Realty®



FLAT RATE
REALTY

Sales Training

Welcome to *Flat Rate Realty®*! In all of our professional real estate transactions, we strive to achieve the very best in quality. Quality through service, quality through training, and quality through people will help us reach and maintain our goals.

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1. Introduction - The Real Estate Sales Profession

Congratulations! You have chosen an exciting and rewarding career in real estate sales. In order to be successful, you must be self-motivated, organized, knowledgeable and energetic. Much of the time, you will be managing yourself. Real estate sales professionals have the self-discipline to work under these conditions and know when to seek the advice and support of their broker.

Your prospective customers are substantially more sophisticated, better-educated and more aware of what they need in a salesperson, company, product or service than ever before. You face more of a challenge in today's business arena than ever before.

What is your role? You represent your company and the service it sells. You provide a valuable service. Clients look to you for expertise and advice in completing a real estate transaction. A better term for your profession may be real estate consultant. Good real estate agents often have repeat business, simply because of the relationships they have carefully developed with their clients.

You also have another role to play – that of revenue generator for your employer. You are an essential factor in helping your company achieve higher sales and bigger profits. It is expected that you will bring in sales to the company.

The real estate sales professional is a rare individual. They carry themselves with an air of self-confidence, success and the ability to immediately establish trust, rapport and credibility. You might say these people have **IMPACT**:

Inspire
Motivate
Persuade
Act
Care
Trust

The materials in this booklet are guidelines and suggestions for helping you start your new professional sales career in real estate on the best note

possible. Some things may seem very simple or even insignificant, but overlooking items can lead to a difficult and unsuccessful sales career. In sales, image is critical to your success. The statement “you only get one chance to make a first impression” is very true. Work with and ask questions of your broker and senior salespersons. These people have valuable experience and can provide many ideas and hints on how and where to start.

Flat Rate Realty provides a comprehensive sales training program to assist you in your future as a real estate sales professional. The first step is to complete the training course for sales professionals. Ongoing training is the key to continued development and success. Advanced training courses are available to provide additional support and reinforcement.

We look forward to seeing you in future Flat Rate Realty classes.

Good Selling.

A. Professional Development

The professional image you project to your client is very important. It is a major factor in building a professional business relationship. Your image determines whether your client believes you, trusts you and will agree to do business with you.

Professional Development covers a number of areas, including characteristics of a good salesperson, business etiquette and professional attire. Your self-image and the commitment you have to your chosen career also affect your professionalism.

How you communicate with your clients, the expertise you have in your products/services, management skills, attitude and organizational skills are measures of your professionalism.

In order to capitalize on your strengths and improve upon your weaknesses, you will need to evaluate yourself honestly and determine what areas may need improvement.

B. Formula for Professionalism

There are several traits necessary to becoming a professional salesperson. They are divided into three categories: Knowledge, Skill and Attitude.

Knowledge: You will have to prepare yourself by continually increasing your knowledge. To be successful, you will discover the ongoing need for education and self-improvement.

- You should be prepared to answer your clients' questions about current market values and trends.
- Having current real estate market information is vital, as you are an agent and advisor and clients rely on your expertise.
- Clients want to know that they can count on you to watch out for their best interests by providing professional advice and counsel.
- Finally, and perhaps most important, is the knowledge of yourself. Your strengths and the areas that need improvement and development should be noted.

Skills: As you will learn, the Flat Rate Realty selling process exposes you to certain skills that will guarantee your success.

- Knowing how to prospect for new business through cold calling, direct mail, telemarketing and customer referrals.
- Understanding how your clients make decisions and what you can do to guide them through their specific process.
- Setting the right kind of objectives for each sales contact.
- Selling yourself as a professional real estate consultant to the client.
- Asking the best questions to identify exactly what your client needs and how you can help get it for them.

- Giving an organized, customer-focused presentation that is clear, concise and powerful.
- Gaining commitment by using a straight-forward and non-manipulative approach.

Attitude:

- Always be positive and deal with everyone in a friendly manner.
- Remember that, as an agent, you work for your clients. Treat them with the appropriate respect and courtesy.
- Always keep your clients' best interests at the top of your priority list.

Are you on the way to becoming a professional real estate salesperson?

C. Characteristics of a Good Salesperson

- *Imagination.* A salesperson harnesses his or her imagination to formulate practical plans that yield results.
- *Persistence.* The successful salesperson hangs on a little longer and works a little harder.
- *Vision.* The present is just the beginning. A good salesperson is impressed with the possibilities of the future.
- *Sincerity.* A good salesperson can be trusted.
- *Integrity.* A salesperson has rules and lives by them.

- *Poise.* A good salesperson is not overbearing, but is friendly and assured.
- *Thoughtfulness.* A good salesperson is considerate and aware.
- *Common Sense.* A successful salesperson needs good judgment based on reason.
- *Initiative.* A successful salesperson gets things done RIGHT NOW!

D. Hearing versus Listening

Are you listening? Or just hearing what is being said? Do you really know and understand what your client is telling you? In other words, are you being a good listener?

Your prospective client is likely to be more open if they feel they are being listened to and that what they are saying is important. Being attentive and showing a genuine interest in your prospective client will produce successful sales calls.

Too often we do not *listen* to what our prospective clients are telling us. Some common mistakes made by salespeople are:

- Talking too much.
- Thinking about their next question, instead of paying attention to what is being said.
- Assuming that he or she can remember the details of a meeting, instead of writing notes on what is being said.
- Not knowing when to keep quiet and let the customer talk.
- Feeling the need to finish everything they had intended to say.

What is effective communication? A sales career is just like any other occupation in that it requires specialized skills and knowledge. The most important skill a salesperson may possess is the ability to communicate. Effective communication is more than just holding a conversation; it is a process of two or more people transferring knowledge, concepts, beliefs or feelings. The messages passed must generate the same thoughts in the receiver's mind as in the mind of the sender. To be an effective salesperson, you must be able to send your exact message into the mind of the prospective client and be able to understand their thought process.

The Communication Process. All communication between two people goes through four stages:

- A *thought* is formed in the speaker's mind.
- The speaker *verbalizes* the thought.
- The listener *hears* the speaker's words
- The listener *interprets* the words in his or her mind.

Errors can occur at any stage of the process. For instance:

- The speaker may select the *wrong words* to express his or her thought.
- The listener may *not hear* the words due to some reason, such as noise, distraction, physical limitation or simply not paying attention.
- The listener may *misinterpret* the speaker's words.

Listening. The listener is in control of the communication process. The listener has the duty of ensuring that there are no errors in the communication process. He or she accomplishes that by using feedback themselves and by demanding feedback from the speaker. The most common form of feedback used in sales is the question. In real estate sales, asking the best questions is a fundamental part of the sales process. By asking the best questions, the salesperson can determine exactly what the client means.

The importance of listening in sales cannot be stressed enough. Every successful salesperson is a good listener. The salesperson should listen more than he or she speaks. If listening carefully, you will be able to determine the thoughts, intentions, needs and wants of your clients.

Do not confuse listening with hearing. Hearing is a physical process. *Listening* is a mental process that involves hearing and interpreting what is being said. To become an effective listener, follow these rules:

- Stop talking. It is impossible to listen while talking.
- Plan ahead and be prepared.
- Nod your head when you understand or agree.
- Take notes so you will remember all that was said.
- Pause and consider before replying.
- Summarize what your client is saying.
- Build on the client's comments in following questions.
- Clarify uncertain points by asking questions.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Fight off distractions.
- Keep an open mind.

Concentration: The Key to Listening. The key to effective listening is concentration. Pay total attention to the speaker. Since your brain can work faster than the speaker can talk, you actually have plenty of time to judge the speaker's words while they are talking.

How do you become an effective listener? Practice your listening skills at every opportunity. Start with really listening to what family members are

telling you. Listen to friends and co-workers. When you listen, do not think of anything else. Concentrate only on the speaker's tone, body movement, choice of words and facial expressions.

Remember that listening pays. It is far easier to make a sale by listening than by talking. When a client calls or walks into your office, they will be happy to discover that you are a listener. By listening to them, you are actually paying them a compliment. You are telling them that they are worth listening to.

Speaking. While listening is, by far, the most important communication tool of the real estate salesperson, he or she must also be proficient as a speaker.

Ideally, you want the client to do most of the talking so they can tell you everything you need to know to gain a commitment. Not all people are obliging. Here is where you must use your talents as a speaker. To optimize the effect of your words, follow these simple rules:

- Choose your words carefully to express your ideas fully and precisely.
- Gear your selection of words toward your audience.
- Your words must convey a message to your audience.
- Your message must have a clearly-defined beginning and end.
- The entire speech must have a purpose.
- Ensure your audience's understanding with questions demanding feedback.

E. Business Etiquette

In your business dealings, it is important to always maintain a professional image. The idea may seem simple and routine, but can be detrimental to your professional success when forgotten or overlooked. The "little things" go a long way toward the development of a strong relationship with your clients.

- Always return telephone calls and emails.
- Send a thank you note after receiving your client's business or a referral.
- Confirm the date and time of appointments so that you don't show up late or on the wrong day.
- If you must reschedule an appointment, give the client as much advance notice as possible.
- Make sure to greet your client with a smile and a firm handshake.
- Keep your word. Make sure to follow up when you said you would.
- If you were going to take care of an issue, make sure that you do.
- Treat your customers as you would like to be treated – with courtesy and respect.

F. Professional Business Attire

When selecting suits and accessories for your business wardrobe, keep in mind the professional image you want to portray. You want to appear confident, strong and trustworthy. The last thing you want is to wear something that will offend, embarrass, intimidate or otherwise make your client feel uncomfortable around you.

In today's workplace, many things have changes and there are different expectations when it comes to attire. In some parts of the country, it is completely appropriate to dress down, but you should still maintain a positive and professional appearance. You need to understand your employer, clients and environment to make the right decision as to the level of professionalism you need to maintain in your attire.

Below are some helpful hints for selecting clothes and accessories for a typical sales professional:

Men's Attire:

- Select conservative suits and shirts; don't go with the fads.
- Pants and tailored sport coats are appropriate in some cases.
- Business suits should have belted pants.
- Have your suit properly tailored to fit you.
- Choose suits in dark, solid colors: blue, grey black or beige. The general rule is – the darker the color, the more authority it transmits.
- Cotton and cotton/polyester blends are the most acceptable shirt fabrics. Standard button cuffs or French cuffs are fine.
- Choose shirts with button-down collars or keep them neatly starched and pressed.
- White or light-colored dress shirts are best.

Men's Accessories:

- Select ties that are versatile and conservative – not too short, long, thin or wide. Patterns should compliment your suit, not clash with it. Keep the wild print ties for the weekend or special occasions. Bow ties usually have a negative effect on your professional image.
- Socks should match the color of your suit. Leave the white sport socks at the gym.
- Shoes should be laced wing-tip or plain toe. Acceptable colors are black and brown. Make sure to get shoes that are comfortable and can stand a lot of wear. Keep them polished and in good condition.
- Your belt should match the color of your shoes and be unobtrusive.
- Jewelry should be conservative and very limited. Many employers and clients frown on men wearing earrings.

Women's Attire:

- Select conservative suits. Choose styles that are “classic” and will serve you for several years. Pantsuits are also appropriate and often more versatile.
- Dresses or skirts with jackets are also acceptable. Tailored styles are most appropriate.
- Choose suits in dark, solid colors: blue, grey black or beige.
- Skirt lengths can vary, but should be about to the knee. Very short skirts are difficult to sit in and are often distracting.
- Tight-fitting clothes detract from your professional image and should be avoided.
- Blouses should be conservative and compliment the suit. Sheer blouses are inappropriate for business, as are tight sweaters.

Women's Accessories:

- Purses should be neutral in color or match your shoes. Keep it small, but with enough room to carry the essentials with you.
- Stockings should be neutral and simple. Keep an extra pair on hand in case of unsightly runs or snags.
- Shoes should be simple, comfortable and of moderate heel-height. Shoes should match or compliment your suit or dress. Avoid shoes with open toes or fad heel styles.
- Jewelry should be limited and conservative. Large, dangling earrings, huge necklaces or a large number of rings all tend to detract from your professional appearance. Bracelets and rings can interfere with writing or demonstrating and may cause people to focus on them rather than on you.

Additional Ideas for All Sales Professionals:

- A neat, professional briefcase is a symbol of success. Your briefcase should be leather and of good quality. It should compliment your style and match the general color-scheme of your wardrobe.
- Always carry a pen with you. A thin silver or gold pen can really compliment a professional image.
- Always carry business cards with you. Store them in a nice cardholder for style and convenience.