

The Ten Dumbest Things New Agents Do

By: Carla Cross

We all want success easily. We all want to “do it our way.” And if we’re honest, in our quest for easy success, we’ve all done dumb things. That is, we realized they were dumb - after the fact. So, just because I’m picking on new agents here doesn’t mean I haven’t done many more than just ten dumb things! I’m listing these here, though, to help you avoid the mistakes I made as a new agent, and the mistakes I’ve observed thousands of new agents make over the years I’ve managed, trained and coached.

Some dumb actions don’t cost us much, but when an agent fails, it costs everyone money - agents, offices and consumers. It’s estimated that it costs a manager \$15-30,000 for every agent hired who fails! So, that agent isn’t a profit-center, she’s a cost-center! In addition, an agent who fails spends at least \$5-15,000 just on “subsidized living” and real estate expenses the first three months in the business. Finally, the customer loses because the agent is out of the business before serving the consumer.

Heads Up

New agents don’t come into the business to fail. But they don’t realize the effort and skill it takes to succeed. In addition, there are increasingly difficult challenges for new agents:

The gap between consumer expectations and agent performance is widening quickly and dramatically. New agents must have better training, coaching and commitment from their brokers.

The market in most areas has become more challenging, so new agents can’t get those “easy sales.”

The committed, career-oriented agent is taking much more of the market share.

It's estimated that 50% of new agents fail and get out of the business in their first year, and 75% are out in two years. That seems to me a huge waste of resources, and a huge contributor to that expectations gap I listed above. We need to stop that attrition now. So, new agents, here are the ten dumb things I've seen thousands do to fail themselves right out of the business:

- 1 Thinking that there are lots of ways to start the business. There aren't. Real estate sales is sales, and sales is a numbers game.
- 2 Thinking they don't have to lead generate, because they'll "do it differently." Don't talk to people consistently and in great numbers, and you'll be flipping burgers before you know it! (not that there is anything wrong with flipping burgers, but you won't be selling real estate)
- 3 Thinking that their manager or office or the Internet will supply them leads. If that were the case, your commissions would be much smaller.
- 4 Thinking that this business is about tasks and technology. It's not. It's about people relationships.
- 5 Treating the business like a "next" business. It's not about finding and selling a customer. It's about finding and keeping the customer for long-term referral business.
- 6 Starting the business part time, with no "drop dead" exit plan from your other work. I know. I started part time, but within three months, I realized that I could not serve my consumer honestly when I had to run to another job. The truth is that you just don't care much about the consumer if you're not committed and working in real estate at least 50 hours a week. If you have to start part time, give yourself a deadline to become full time. Managers, don't hire without that deadline in writing. You'll be wasting your time training and coaching.

- 7 Not getting a commitment from your manager that he/she will consistently and frequently coach you to a game plan. If your manager can't rise to that level of commitment, how successful do you think your manager intends you to be? (side note to managers: I believe you need to be 100% committed to your agents, or else the likelihood they will fail is 100%)
- 8 Thinking that the best commission plan is the best place to work. As the old song says, "Nothin' from nothin' is nothin'." You need to sell lots of real estate - lots and lots of real estate. Choose the place where you think that will happen. New agents who figure out they only have to sell three homes a year to pay those fees are thinking like losers.
- 9 Not investing in the business until they "get successful." When would that be? Why do you get to be successful without an investment? With that attitude, how are you going to compete with those great agents - and how are you going to meet those amazingly high consumer expectations?
- 10 Going into the business to see if they like it. I'll bet 50% of new agents don't really go into the business to make it a career. They go into the business to "try it out." If that's your attitude, how do you expect your manager and your company to be 100% committed to you when you're 25% committed?

A Great Manager + A Great Plan + Accountability
= **SUCCESS**

Harsh words above, but true. If you want to succeed, find a great manager who will coach you and hold you to a start-up plan. Find a manager who is 100% committed to you, and you will be one of those 50% who survive their first years and go onto great careers!