

Selling Print to the Real Estate Industry [Playbook]

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No matter what's going on in the economy, there's money to be made for printers who can get in the door with real estate brokers.

To sell deeply and profitably, you must develop relationships and earn a seat at the project planning table. You'll want to work with the brokers and top managers who control the budget.



I've laid out a playback for selling to the real estate industry. You can take these sections and create sales meetings around them.

INTRODUCTION: Facts to Ponder

FACT 1. Most real estate companies have annual printing and marketing budgets, unlike many of the industries we sell to. That's great!

FACT 2. Real estate professionals buy print and marketing services even when the economy is rocky. They get it!

FACT 3. Conversely, they also buy marketing and printing when business is going well. They invest even when "they shouldn't have to."

FACT 4. Although real estate professionals are busiest in spring and summer, they buy print and marketing services year round.

FACT 5. Print salespeople often overlay our own "facts" onto customers' buying patterns. We tend to decide if we should approach them or not. Let them decide!

FACT 6. It's always a good time to sell print in the real estate industry.

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CHAPTER 1: The Basics

1. Brokers are the ones with the buying power. The broker is the head of the agency or profit center within a bigger real estate organization. Sometimes the broker is the head of his or her own company.
 2. Brokers have final say. If you want to make big money, don't focus on the agents as they generally are not big spenders.
 3. Brokers rarely hold their own open houses or attend generic real estate events. You'll find them at events with business people.
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CHAPTER 2: The Hidden Truths

1. Many brokers offer their agents branded marketing and print packages through an online dashboard or web-to-print portal. These programs are usually operated by services that specialize in the real estate industry. The broker pays a per-seat subscription for the service, a cost that may get passed to the agent.
2. Agents can order business cards, brochures, signage, flyers, data management, e-mail newsletters and literally every type of print or marketing item that is commonly associated with realtors.
3. The portal helps the broker control the look and messaging of their brand, which is their intellectual property. Brokers want everything tightly controlled so the agents can't freestyle their own marketing pieces and undermine the brand value. If you sell print online, you are familiar with these templated web-to-print portals branded to the print buyer.

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4. Brokers know that many entry-level agents will wash out, while the career agents may be buying print on their own, so they rarely invest in web-to-print other than the subscription fee.
 5. If you want to win the print work for their branded dashboard or web-to-print portal, your margins are probably going to be small. You will find yourself praying for agents to quit so you can print a whole new batch of items for the next rookie. Expect short runs, quick turns, and lots of hand holding (I recommend chat bots and online tutorials).
 6. Although it's difficult to break into the day-to-day printing -- and it's not likely to be high-margin work -- there are opportunities for other high value, high ticket printing.
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CHAPTER 3: The Nuance

1. Brokers are competitive with other brokers. They will be interested if you have a new print product or service that could blow their competitors' minds. Even if it doesn't generate a huge ROI, they will want to know about it first. I have sold animation, high-end relocation packages, email-to-print, ebooks and other high value products this way.
2. Brokers will invest in their personal brand. Develop a program just for them, fit it to their core brand values, and help them make an impression in their world.
3. Brokers are strategic. Help them make a significant leap ahead in their market or wring more from an existing marketing channel.
4. Most brokers built their businesses using print. From print advertising to flyers to direct mail and postcards, they know print works. To get attention, start with a fascinating print sample and back it up with a solid case study with the kind of stats they care about.
5. Selling to brokers is not a drop-by sales call. This is a high-end sale that requires preparation and creativity.

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CHAPTER 4: What You Should Say

Your messaging to brokers should not distract. In clear, persuasive terms, explain that:

1. Your print solutions TURN HEADS.
 2. You have done your research, and you have SPECIFIC IDEAS just for them.
 3. You will RESPECT THEIR TIME.
 4. You will ELEVATE THEIR BRAND.
 5. You will MAKE THEM LOOK GOOD in the business community.
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CHAPTER 5: What NOT to Say

Don't tell high-powered brokers that....

1. Your solution makes their life easier. The top experts in real estate thrive on difficult situations. If it's easy, it's not worth doing.
2. Your solution will save them money. See above: They spend money to make money.
3. You are high quality, error-free, on time, yadda yadda yadda. That should go unsaid because they literally will not waste one second with you if you're not the best.

About that last point. If your online credentials aren't impeccable, if your social media is sloppy, or if you have negative reviews that can be substantiated, they will cancel their appointment with you. Seriously, they will say yes to a meeting and then cancel you, just like that (snaps).

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CHAPTER 6: How to Get a Seat at the Table

1. Brokers are all about chain of command. They prefer to work with just a few RELIABLE people.
2. In the beginning, you may work under the broker's marketing people who, by the way, are protecting their own personal fiefdoms.
3. Serve before selling. Be a team player. When you do get invited to do business, start small, deliver flawlessly, and make others look good. Prove yourself.
4. Once you earn a regular spot at the table, you can start developing high-ticket win-win projects that meet the goals of everyone on the team -- yet are profitable for you.
5. You need a relationship with the broker to get invited to the table.

A personal relationship? Wo-ho, not so easy, you say! Yes, that's the small print way down here in Chapter 6. How do you build a personal relationship with a smart, high-achieving, tactical, well-connected person? Read on!

CHAPTER 7: Making a connection

1. Be active where they're active.
2. Give back. Always be thinking of ways to serve your community, because brokers tend to be community minded. Serve where they serve.
3. Be known. Expand your personal and professional networks. Get a toe hold where you can and then expand your influence. Be influential where they're influential.
4. Aim high. Be a role model. Do what you say you're going to do. Adopt a winning mindset. Find areas in your life where you can excel, and do it consistently. Excellence is a muscle that needs regular exercise. Excel in the ways they excel.

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5. Develop a brand that attracts successful people. Improve your website. Professionally address negative online reviews and thank people for the positive ones. Design and write better marketing materials. Write about what you do with clarity and persuasiveness. Be authoritative in the ways they are authoritative.
6. On social media, be interesting and professional. Connect to the people they're connected to. Have conversations. Monitor your channels so you don't leave anyone hanging. Reply to connection requests promptly. Reply if someone comments or tags you. Be gracious and inclusive. Have a big enough network that they know you're a serious player. Be social where they're social.
7. Sell better. The old principals of how to find, sell and close still make sense, but the methodologies have changed because today's print buyers have changed. If you want to close more business, invest in sales training from modern experts who have actually had to sell print and market strategically in our current environment. Real estate people know how to sell in today's world. Sell well because they sell well.

There you have it. I have given you a playbook on how to sell print to the real estate market. Now take this program and run with it!

The information in these 7 chapters has allowed me to sell successfully to the top brokers in the real estate market for a quarter of a century. I know you can do it, too!

Author Sandy Hubbard 🌻 Marketing Strategist for the Printing Industry consults with owners of print and media businesses of all sizes -- building visibility and increasing sales using solid techniques and a proven system. Connect with Sandy on [LinkedIn](#) or email HelpPrintThrive@gmail.com. Copyright Sandy Hubbard 2021.