


**Supercharged Marketing:  
Part 1**



1



First, the bad news...

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WE'RE ALL OUT OF MAGIC WANDS

2

Now, the good news...

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**This will be the most important class you take this year, because it will give you more of this...**

3



**Money: We want – we need it...**

4

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- Supercharged Marketing
- Believing in Yourself
- Setting Personal and Professional Goals
- Planning and Executing a Focused Marketing Campaign

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1.

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**Supercharged Marketing**



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### Supercharged Marketing

- Congratulations on your decision to invest in yourself – not many are willing to “*spend a little to make a lot.*” More people take our technical courses than our marketing courses.
- You may possess a lot of technical knowledge, and you might be a great home inspector...

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### Supercharged Marketing

- *...but the technical end is only 30% of what you need to be \$ucce\$\$ful in this business!!*
- You can be the greatest home inspector in the world in terms of technical knowledge and defect recognition, but whoever markets the best makes the most \$\$\$.

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### Supercharged Marketing

- Most state home inspection pre-license curriculums say this is a technical business.
- **It's really a communications business.**
- 70% of the success you can achieve in the home inspection industry comes directly from communications and marketing...

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### Supercharged Marketing

- **More good news:** you will be better at marketing your business, even if you do only 20% of what we recommend in this two-part course.
- Some of these techniques can pay off quickly, some in a few weeks, and others will pay dividends down the road.

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### Supercharged Marketing

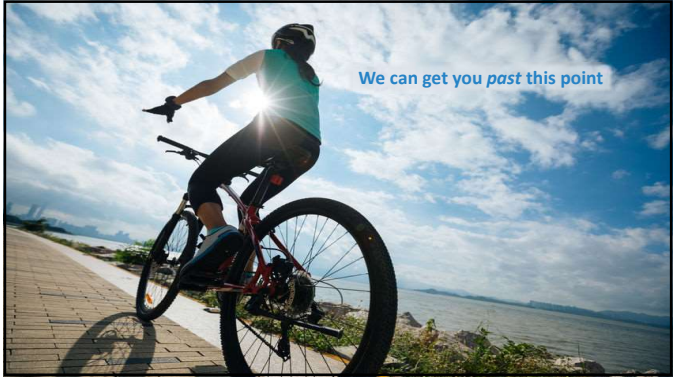
- Getting good at marketing is a lot like learning to ride a bicycle – a little scary at first, and it seems like you’ll never get it.
- But over time, you do get it, and not only are you not scared anymore, but you’re riding with no hands!!

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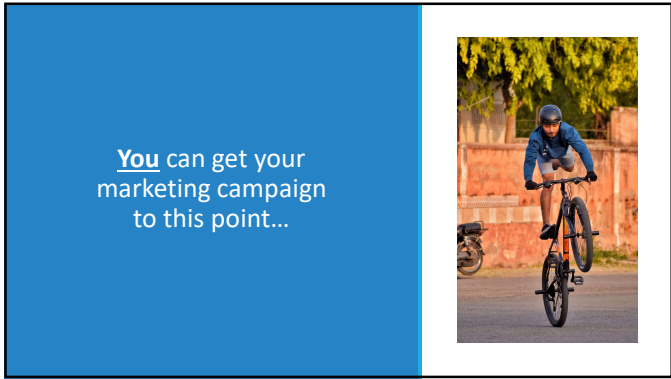
We will help you to learn how to “ride the bike” of marketing

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We can get you past this point

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You can get your marketing campaign to this point...



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You might even get your marketing program to SOAR...

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**Supercharged Marketing**

- SCM Parts 1 & 2 show you how to market home inspections from A to Z, from start to finish – **what to say, what not to say, how to say it, when to say it.**
- Please don't take offense if you are currently doing any of the things that we feel are not worthwhile: instead, keep an open mind. *We speak from years and years of experience.*

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2.

**Believing in Yourself**

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## Believing in Yourself

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- It's very simple...

**If you don't believe in yourself, how can you expect others to believe in you???**

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## Believing in Yourself

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- You have just 3 seconds to create a good impression when meeting someone new.
- People appraise your visual and **behavioral** appearance from head to toe.
- They observe your **demeanor**, mannerisms, and body language and even assess your grooming, clothing and accessories.

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**The guy on the right might be brilliant, but we're conditioned to do business with the guy on the left**



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## Believing in Yourself

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- Lack of strong belief in yourself, your employees, your product, your knowledge – any or all of these affect your **demeanor** and **behavior** in ways that are virtually impossible to overcome.

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## Believing in Yourself

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- If you don't have strong belief in yourself and your product, people can read that immediately.
- Remember, when marketing to real estate agents **you are marketing to sales professionals with far more sales training than most home inspectors**
- So don't try to fool them!!

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## Believing in Yourself


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- **What to do?**
- Improve yourself technically by getting all the education that you can, not just the state requirements.
- Subscribe to *Old House Journal*, *Fine Homebuilding* and *Journal of Light Construction* (and actually read the darn things!).

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Recommended Reading

- 🏠 Old House Journal
- 🏠 Fine Homebuilding
- 🏠 Journal of Light Construction



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### Believing in Yourself

- Improve your inspection product to be the best that it can be (discussed in *Supercharged Marketing, Part 2*).
- Improve your marketing skills (hey, that's why you're taking this class!).
- Improve your verbal (public speaking) skills.


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### Believing in Yourself

- **Ways to improve your verbal skills:**
  - Take speech classes at a community college (usually inexpensive)
  - Join Toastmasters (\$50-\$70/year) [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org)
  - Be a volunteer on a professional association/school/government committee (it's good visibility, too!)

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Joining a Toastmasters chapter is really an investment in yourself

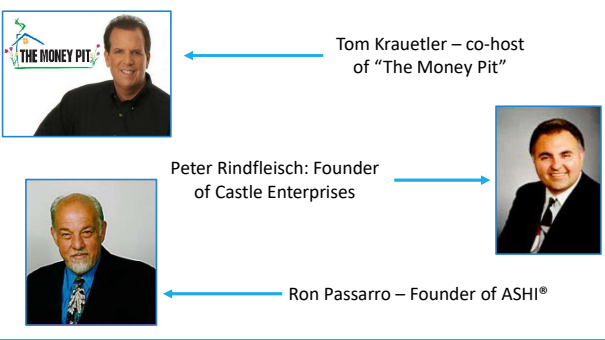


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Volunteering for a local government committee costs nothing but an evening a month (and it's great local exposure!)



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Tom Krauetler – co-host of "The Money Pit"

Peter Rindfleisch: Founder of Castle Enterprises

Ron Passarro – Founder of ASHI®

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### Believing in Yourself

- **Who are you hanging with??**
- Negative people drain your energy and cause you to be negative. Then you feed off one another and get locked in a clique of losers.
- It's a hard choice, but you might need to change your circle of friends. You need to be with positive people who are winners.

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### Believing in Yourself

- Associate with confident, successful people. They have already done what you fear doing. Now, simply do what they have done.
- Changing your personal image can help, too. Getting a new hairstyle, more stylish glasses, some new clothes, and losing a little weight can all help to improve self-confidence.

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Just don't confuse confidence, with stupidity...

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### Believing in Yourself

Six characteristics of a successful entrepreneur:

1. **Has a lot of energy**
2. **Willing to try new things**
3. **Likes working with people**
4. **Is not easily discouraged**
5. **Is well organized**
6. **Likes to take charge**

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Wile E. Coyote epitomizes the concepts of perseverance and self-confidence

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### Believing in Yourself

Six characteristics of a successful entrepreneur:

1. **Has a lot of energy**
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## Believing in Yourself

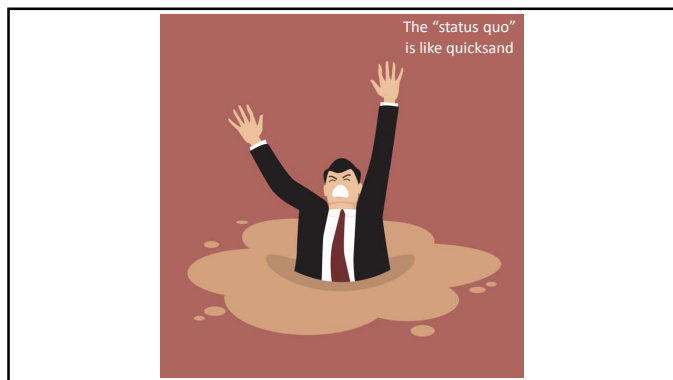
- **Willing to try new things:**
- You have to be willing to recognize things that “have always been done that way” but don’t really work very well, or could be accomplished in a different and better way.
- **You have to overcome the normal human aversion to change.**

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## Believing in Yourself

- **The status quo** (things as they are) **has an extremely strong pull.** Routines are hard and even painful to change. You may make a change and have to change again. You’ll feel discouraged.
- As you take the unfamiliar path of change, you may second-guess your commitment. You will feel the pull drawing you, tempting you back to your old, non-productive ways (your comfort zone).

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## Believing in Yourself

**Life is 10% what happens to you, and 90% how you react to it... you are in charge of your attitude."**

-Charles Swindoll, author, pastor, internationally syndicated radio host

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## Believing in Yourself

- The four-letter word that starts with "F" and prevents success:

**F E A R**

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## Believing in Yourself

- To conquer **FEAR**, you have to face it. Preparation and courage are your weapons against fear.
- Preparation includes doing all of the things we’ve been talking about to increase your knowledge, improve your self-image and **enhance your attitude.**

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### Believing in Yourself

▪ **Facing FEAR:**

Courage grows with action. Fear is learned and must be unlearned. After facing that fear, you will feel exhilarated. Without fear, there can be no courage.

**Fear provides the opportunity to be successful, because everyone else is afraid, too!!!**

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### Believing in Yourself

▪ **Facing FEAR of rejection:**

▪ Success requires hard work. You'll do a lot of marketing, which seemingly amounts to nothing. You may hear a lot of "No's" or a few rude rejections.

▪ If it was easy, everyone would be wealthy. **You have to march on.**

▪ Remember the mantra of people successful in business: **"Some will. Some won't. So what. Next."**

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### Believing in Yourself

▪ **Facing FEAR of making mistakes:**

- If you are afraid of making mistakes, you'll never do anything.
- No marketing plan is ever perfect. No presentation is ever perfect.
- *You'll never really feel "ready" to start a marketing campaign.*

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### Believing in Yourself

▪ **Facing FEAR of success:**

How will I handle the extra volume? What if I have to hire more people? Will I need to get a bigger office? Etc.

These are common questions. Fact is, these things will work themselves out, so DO NOT worry about them. **You'll know what to do when the time comes.**

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## 3. Setting Personal and Professional Goals



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### Setting Goals

- You've all heard it before: you should set goals so that you know where you are going.
- Goals can (and probably will) change over time, but should be firmly set over shorter periods of 1 to 3 years.

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Goals should be set high...  
but still be achievable in your circumstances

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## Setting Goals

**What are your goals??**

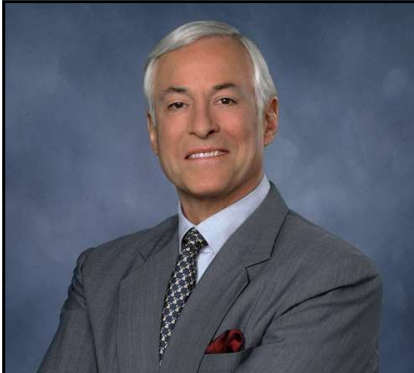
- \_\_\_\_\_ To be the biggest?
- \_\_\_\_\_ To be the best?
- \_\_\_\_\_ To make a comfortable living?
- \_\_\_\_\_ To make a lot of money?
- \_\_\_\_\_ To have a lot of time off?
- \_\_\_\_\_ To grow quickly?
- \_\_\_\_\_ To grow slowly?

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## Setting Goals

- **Goals should be set high, but still be achievable.**
- It's easy to say you want to "be the biggest," but you have to understand what it will take to get there and be willing to pay the price.
- Setting achievable goals will add to your confidence when you hit them.

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*"Goals in writing are dreams with deadlines"*

Brian Tracy,  
Success Guru

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## Setting Goals

- We all have multiple goals, usually both personal and professional.
- **What do you really want to do?** What's most important to you?
- Goals **MUST** be prioritized properly, otherwise you won't accomplish any of them.

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## Setting Goals

- **Professional goals MUST be in line with your personal goals.** They need to be set in concert with each other.

Example: the professional goal of being the biggest home inspection firm in the area will probably be in conflict with the personal goal of spending more time with your kids.

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## Setting Goals

- **Professional goals should be established with full knowledge and support of those you are close to.**

Example: if your spouse does not fully support your plans to expand and hire additional inspectors, you may fail to hit your goal (or be headed to divorce court).

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## Setting Goals

- **If you already have employees (or if you hire them later), they should be aware of your goals.**

It's very important for everybody to know where you're headed and buy into the plan (remember, this business is 70% communications, and that includes your employees).

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## Setting Goals

- **Goal setting - loose guidelines:**

- If you're brand new, getting 50 to 75 inspections in your first full year is realistic in an urban area (and maybe 15 to 30 in a smaller or rural area).

- If you've been in business for a while, you should be able to increase your business by 20 to 50% within a year.

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## Believing in Yourself

- Six characteristics of a successful entrepreneur:

1. **Has a lot of energy**
2. **Willing to try new things**
3. **Likes working with people**
4. **Is not easily discouraged**
5. **Is well organized**
6. **Likes to take charge**

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## Setting Goals

- **5) Is well organized**

- This is important: **You won't hit your goals unless you get yourself well organized enough** to be able to execute the marketing plan.

- Goals without action ruin self-confidence and lead to acceptance of failure.

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4.  
Planning and Executing a Focused Marketing Campaign  
Real Estate Agent Marketing



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### Focused Marketing

- What are you in business to do?
- It's **NOT** to perform home inspections.
- **You should be in business to sell inspections.** This is a service business: you're selling yourself and your customer service skills more than anything else.
- **You need to think of yourself as a marketer first, and an inspector second.**

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### Focused Marketing

- Southwest Airlines founder *Herb Kelleher* drilled one guiding principle into employees:  
**Their business was not about flying, it was about serving customers.**
- Keep passengers happy and the money will follow.

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Not coincidentally, Southwest is the 3<sup>rd</sup> busiest US airline and one of the few that actually makes a profit (as of July 2009)

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### Focused Marketing

- **Who really are your "customers"?**
- In any industry that is so dependent on referrals to drive business your way, there are two distinct target groups that a marketing plan must address.
- Successful home inspectors usually consider the referring real estate agent to be the **customer** and the fee-paying home buyer to be the **client**.

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### Focused Marketing

- **Is it a conflict of interest to consider agents as "customers"?**
- Not if your inspection loyalty is with the house and client. Just report what you find as you find it, and you'll be fine.
- If an agent doesn't like that, it's OK, because there usually are plenty of other agents for you to do business with.

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## Focused Marketing

- **Customers and clients**
- The great customer service skills that you will develop will lend themselves toward marketing to both of these groups.
- *Successful inspectors spend their limited resources chasing agents simply because 70 to 80% of all home buyers work with agents when purchasing a home.*

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## Focused Marketing

- A review of basic concepts:
  - Know your market
  - Know your message
  - Develop personal relationships
  - Build brand recognition
  - Keep your promises
  - Focus on client/referral source
  - Nothing negative

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## Too much marketing is done in our heads

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## Your marketing plan must be in writing!!!

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## Focused Marketing

- Must reflect *your* goals.  
**What are you comfortable with?**
- Must be realistic.  
**Will it work in your circumstances?**
- Must be executable.  
**Can you "pull it off"?**
- Should work to your strengths.  
**And avoid your weaknesses.**

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## Focused Marketing

- **In general, here's what doesn't work:**
  - \* Spreading thousands of pieces of promotional material to dozens of offices.
  - \* One-time visits to real estate offices with no follow up.
  - \* Inspections that focus on the inspection process itself.

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### Focused Marketing

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- **In general, here's what doesn't work:**
  - \* Handwritten inspection reports (discussed in SCM Part 2).
  - \* Newspaper advertising (especially in urban areas).
  - \* Publishing your inspection fees (discussed in SCM Part 2).

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### Focused Marketing

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- **In general, here's what does work:**
  - \* Working a *manageable number* of real estate offices *in your backyard* that you can visit regularly (especially in an urban area).
  - \* Providing great service to both customers and clients.
  - \* Providing a great product (Part 2).

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### Focused Marketing

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- **In general, here's what does work:**
  - \* Having a well constructed website that allows customers and clients to "visit" you at any time (SCM Part 2).
  - \* Getting better known in your community (**familiarity**).
  - \* Building quality relationships with good referral sources (**familiarity**).

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### Focused Marketing

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- **Why focused marketing works so well:**
  - \* You have "common ground" with Realtors® in your backyard.
  - \* You know the neighborhoods.
  - \* You know other local businesspeople and community leaders (or you *should*).
  - \* You save time and money when you work locally.

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### Focused Marketing

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- **General marketing thoughts**
  - \* From 9 to 5, Monday through Friday, you should only be doing one of two things – performing home inspections or marketing (including follow-up calls).
  - \* Do all your "personal" stuff earlier or later in the day or on the weekend.
  - \* **When you get really focused on your marketing plan, it will work well.**

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### Focused Marketing

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- **Your backyard will be your marketing region – let's define it:**
  - \* Get a large area map. Get a marker and indicate your marketing region on the map. Use major roads, highways, rivers or creeks as your borders.
  - \* Keep the size of this area manageable in both time and distance.

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## Focused Marketing

- Understand we are NOT saying you shouldn't do an inspection outside of your marketing region – you should go as far as you are willing to drive.
- But we ARE saying that you should not do any marketing outside of your region – it defeats the whole idea of focused marketing.
- You only market to agents with offices in your region – avoid “shotgun” marketing.

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## Focused Marketing

- A smaller marketing region is better than a larger one, especially if you are working it properly.
- Get a phone book or two, surf the internet, or get a list from the local Board of Realtors®.
- **Make a database (Excel or Access) of all the real estate offices in your marketing region.**

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## Focused Marketing

- **How the marketing database is used:**
- Keeps track of when you last visited an office.
- Keeps track of agent referrals.
- Tells you your best referral sources.
- Generates marketing material.
- Tells you if your marketing efforts are working.

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## Focused Marketing

- **If you are lost when it comes to databases, here are your choices:**
- Take a community college class.
- Ask a friend or relative to help you get it set up.
- Hire a college student to set it up (cheaper than a pro).
- Hire a pro (and get it done right).

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## Focused Marketing

- **The marketing database should start with the following for each real estate office in your region:**
- Office name and complete address, main phone number, website (for the individual office), number of agents, office manager's name, and broker's name.

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### Focused Marketing

- Next, call each office and ask: how many agents do they have, the broker's name and the name of the person you just talked to.
- If someone asks why, introduce yourself and explain that you're "expanding into their area."
- Calling is the quickest way to get this info – enter it into the database.

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### Focused Marketing

- Now, sort the database by "number of agents," and pick the top 10 or 15 offices for the focused marketing plan.
- In small areas you'll probably work every office in town (and maybe in two or three other towns).
- If you are already "in" at some offices, then these of course will be included in your 10 or 15 offices.

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### Focused Marketing

- This is the start of your marketing database. **This will become your most important weapon in your marketing arsenal.**
- Later, the database can be sorted by office, by agent, or by number of referrals. You will print marketing reports and marketing letters directly from this database (SCM Part 2).

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### Focused Marketing

- **Why so few offices?**
- To be effective, you need **face time** with office managers, gate keepers, brokers and agents. The more **face time** the better. You need 3, 4, 5, or more visits for someone to begin to feel comfortable and **familiar** with you.

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### Focused Marketing

- **People refer people they know and like.**
- Service providers gain the majority of their clients through referrals.
- You would probably not refer a dentist or a contractor or an accountant to a friend unless you have had a positive personal experience (**face time**) with that service provider.

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### Focused Marketing

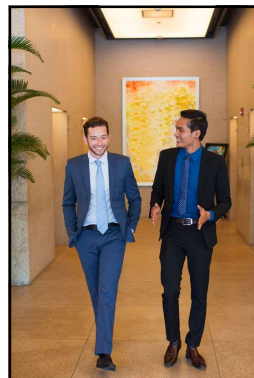
- **We don't like strangers:**
- People are much more comfortable with people they know, *even if they're not really friends.*
- Brochures, flyers, and email can all be part of your marketing plan, but only **face time** gets people to know you (it's all about **familiarity**).

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### Focused Marketing

- Simply walking into a real estate office and somehow proving your technical superiority over other inspectors will not get you many referrals.
- Getting people to see what a great person you are and what great customer service you offer (**through face time**) gets you business. Simple as that.

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### Focused Marketing

- **Face time** simply means **quality** time spent chatting, sharing a joke, or even having lunch with a current or potential source of referrals.
- It allows people to get to know and understand each other better, leading to strong relationships, greater respect and **familiarity**.

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### Focused Marketing

**Face Time**  
should be your primary and preferred method of developing personal relationships – ***and building business***

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We all know where this picture was taken

### Focused Marketing

- Home inspectors do not have the money to brand a logo the way McDonald's does.
- Our logos are right above our shoulders: and this is why **face time** is so important!



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### Believing in Yourself

- Six characteristics of a successful entrepreneur:
  - Has a lot of energy
  - Willing to try new things
  - Likes working with people
  - Is not easily discouraged
  - Is well organized
  - Likes to take charge

100

### Focused Marketing

- 3) Likes working with people
- If you want to make money, someone has to give you that money. To give you their money or referrals, people have to like you. The best way to get people to like you is to like them first.
- The typical entrepreneur is a "people person" who is always ready with a warm handshake and a smile.

101

### Focused Marketing

- Getting into real estate offices:
- When you walk in, you'll probably encounter a **gatekeeper**. This is the person that stops you at the front.
- Say this: "Hi, I'm Steve with Generic Home Inspections and we're expanding into your area. I'd like to speak with a few agents, if I could."

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### Focused Marketing

- **Getting into real estate offices:**
- If the gatekeeper says OK, then go on in and present **your story** to anyone who'll listen.
- Chances are the gatekeeper will say no, so your best option is to not worry about agents right now and instead work the gatekeeper.

103

### Focused Marketing

- **It's not sales – it's just a conversation!**
- Relax and make it easier for yourself. Your goal should just be to make some conversation – you don't have to "hard sell" anybody.
- Just make pleasant conversation, weave in your story, and things will grow from there.

104

### Focused Marketing

- **Basic business conversation rules:**
- Ask "interview" questions to get started.  
(How long have you worked here? Do you live nearby? Etc.)
- Be sensitive to the other person – maybe this is not a good time to talk.
- Keep the conversation moving. Limit responses to 60 seconds or less.
- Avoid money, politics, and religion.

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### Focused Marketing

- **Basic business conversation rules:**
- Do not interrupt.
- Keep it balanced – do not talk too much about yourself and be interested in what the other person has to say.
- If someone does or says something rude, ignore it.
- Be upbeat and positive – do not complain.
- Do not criticize anyone.

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### Focused Marketing

- **Top five most common topics of business conversation, in order:** (from University of Northern Iowa)
- 1. Current events: keep up with the news to have something to say.
- 2. Sports: even if you don't like sports, know what season it is and the names of the local teams.

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### Focused Marketing

- **Top five most common topics of business conversation, in order:** (from University of Northern Iowa)
- 3. The event or job at hand: if you show up at any business-related event, you need to know who sponsored it and why! Do your research in advance [example: real estate charitable functions].

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### Focused Marketing

▪ **Top five most common topics of business conversation, in order:**  
(from University of Northern Iowa)

- 4. The organization sponsoring the event: asking other attendees about the organization is a great conversation starter [example: real estate charitable functions].

109

### Focused Marketing

▪ **Top five most common topics of business conversation, in order:**  
(from University of Northern Iowa)

- 5. Personal demographics: where did you go to school, where do you live, how many kids do you have, etc. [with focused marketing you'll have a lot in common].

110

### Focused Marketing

▪ **The gatekeeper is your key to the real estate office.**

- Get to know them well. Tell them amusing stories. Bring them small gifts. Learn the names of their kids. Get on a first name basis with them.
- It may take a few visits, but they will let you in.
- **Most inspectors overlook the gatekeeper.**

111

Treat the gatekeeper well!



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### Focused Marketing

▪ **The gatekeeper can (and will):**

- \* Tell you when the broker or office manager is around.
- \* Tell you who the big hitters are.
- \* Tell you who the rising stars are.
- \* Tell you when they have office meetings and how to participate.
- \* Give you free rein in the office.


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### Focused Marketing

▪ **Five gifts for the gatekeeper:**

1. Godiva chocolates
  2. "Gourmet" cookies, brownies, etc.
  3. Humorous desk items
  4. Flowers or small potted, flowering plant (if appropriate)
  5. Any small item that fits their interests
- All of these are less than \$10, obtained locally or online (ask for help with ideas!)

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This can get you past the gatekeeper!

\$7 to \$8 for box of 4

115

And so can this!!



\$7 to \$8

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### Focused Marketing

- **Of course, your goal is to meet and build relationships with agents.**
- When you get **face time** with an agent, you have just a couple of minutes to tell them your story.
- Within this short time, your story has to convince them that you're worth them spending their time on.

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### Focused Marketing

- **What's your story?**
- You need to develop a 60 to 90 second "unique selling proposition" that can be delivered with confidence to a potential source of referrals. Rehearse it.
- Focus should be on the customer ("our report style makes *your* job easier," or "we can schedule inspections to work with *your* schedule).

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### Focused Marketing

- **What's your story?**
- Introduce yourself, present a business card, tell the agent(s) how you can make *their* job easier through great customer service.
- Have a sample of your great report format to show them (SCM Part 2), and *never* use a real report.

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### Focused Marketing

- **What's your story: what won't work**
- NCR paper report formats.
- Saying "no" to reasonable requests.
- A trades background (not because it's bad, but because it's very common – being a "home builder" is better).
- Talking too much about yourself.
- Arrogance, poor manners/grooming.

120

### Focused Marketing

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- **What's your story: what WILL work**
- Any unusual background (pilot, minister, commodities trader, musician, etc.).
- Any managerial background.
- Bachelor's degree or higher.
- Saying "yes" to reasonable requests.
- Computer report format with a summary, photos, and **ability to email it.**
- Emphasis/focus on the customer/client.

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### Focused Marketing

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- **What's your story: what WILL work**
- Speaking sincerely and "from the heart."
- Long term ties to the community.
- Community service (Jaycees, Rotary, etc.).
- Expressing a desire to help people.
- Displaying a bit of passion about your services, while also appearing humble.
- Using a brief testimonial from a customer.

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### Focused Marketing

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- **What's your story: what WILL work**
- Try to find the agent's hot button:  
For example, if an agent says that most home inspectors are too nit-picky, then explain several different ways that you are "fair" to the house and feel no need to get the client overly excited.

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### Focused Marketing

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- **What's your story: what WILL work**
- **The feel-felt-found technique:**  
"I understand how you feel. A lot of the agents that work with us felt that way too, but they found that my approach to the inspection was just what they were looking for. In fact, I get letters like this," then pull out a copy of a thank you note or a testimonial letter from an agent.

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### Focused Marketing

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- **What's your story: what WILL work**
- "The home inspection has two major parts – one I can control and one I can't. I have no control over the condition of the home. The part I **can** control is me, and I approach every inspection with knowledge, professionalism, respect, integrity and a helpful, upbeat attitude."

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### Focused Marketing

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- **What's your story: what WILL work**
- "I'm not your typical inspector, and here's why..."
- "My inspection helps to limit your risk and exposure on the condition of the home."
- "We try to be fair to the house."
- "We don't feel it's our role to talk anybody out of buying a home."
- "We don't believe in scaring the buyer."

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### Focused Marketing

▪ **What's your story: what WILL work**

- "I love to help folks get into their new home."
- "I love to work with first time buyers."
- "We love to help agents get their buyers into their new homes."
- "Well, I just try to do a good, honest job for everybody, but a lot of agents sure do like to refer us."

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### Focused Marketing

▪ **Sample dialogue for when you first meet a potential referral source:**

You: "Hi, I'm Steve with Generic Home Inspections. How are you today?"

Agent, looking bored: "I'm alright."

You: "May I take a minute to show you a sample of our inspection report that's really easy to follow?" (pull out your sample, open it to a typical page and hand it to the agent).

Agent, still looking bored: "I suppose."

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### Focused Marketing

▪ **Sample dialogue for when you first meet a potential referral source:**

You: "I just really enjoy working with buyers and helping them get into their houses. A few years ago I was an assistant manager at CVS but this is so much more rewarding."

Agent: "You left a pretty good job to do this? Well, a lot of these guys are just scaring the buyers away. You know, no house is going to be perfect."

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### Focused Marketing

▪ **Sample dialogue for when you first meet a potential referral source:**

You: "Of course not, and I understand that. I just write what's there, and try to help the buyer understand the difference between maintenance items and defects and also to understand when defects are usually easier or cheaper to correct. I don't feel it's my role to talk anybody out of buying a house, especially since everybody has a different situation and maybe can't afford a new house in great condition."

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### Focused Marketing

▪ **Sample dialogue for when you first meet a potential referral source:**

Agent: "OK, well, I've got a couple of inspectors I like to work with, but I'll keep you in mind."

You: "I'd sure appreciate that. As you can see, our report is really easy to follow, with a nice summary, photos and a lot of maintenance tips for the buyer. I like to think of myself as helping *you* to get the buyer into the house, because like I said, it's not my role to scare them away – I just give 'em the facts and let them decide."

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### Focused Marketing

▪ **Sample dialogue for when you first meet a potential referral source:**

Agent: "Great, well I've got a couple of things to finish up here."

You: "Sure, thanks for taking a minute and hopefully we'll hook up pretty soon. \*Looking at a photo on the agent's desk\* By the way, I'm guessing that's your daughter? She's really a cutie – how old is she?"

Agent: "Oh, thanks, that's Melissa. She's 10."

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### Focused Marketing

- **Sample dialogue for when you first meet a potential referral source:**

You: "So, she's probably in 5<sup>th</sup> grade?"

Agent: "Yes, at Park View School."

You: "That's where my son went – he's in 7<sup>th</sup> grade at Westlake Middle School now."

Agent: "My older daughter is in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. What's your son's name?"

You: "Billy."

133

### Focused Marketing

- **Sample dialogue for when you first meet a potential referral source:**

Agent: \*Looking at your card\* "You said your name was Sanders. Billy Sanders. I'll ask my daughter if she knows him."

You: "And I'll ask Billy if he knows your daughter – what was her name?"

Agent: "Patricia, but everybody calls her Tish for short."

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### Focused Marketing

- **Sample dialogue for when you first meet a potential referral source:**

You: "Well, I know you're busy but it was sure nice meeting you. Thanks again for taking a minute to chat."

Agent: "Sure, why don't you leave me a few more cards? What do you typically charge?"

You: "Our fees depend on the size of the house, but we're very competitive with the other inspectors around here."

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### Focused Marketing

- **Sample dialogue for when you first meet a potential referral source:**

Agent: "OK, that sounds good. Thanks for coming in."

You: "Sure, and I'll ask Billy if he knows Tish. If there's anything I can do to help you out, just give us a call, and of course we'd be real pleased to get a referral from you. I'm sure you'd like our style."

Agent: "OK. We'll be seeing you."

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### Focused Marketing

- **As you work these offices and meet some agents, this new info is then entered into the marketing database:**
- Agent's name, phone numbers, email, date of last contact, type of last contact, type of last contact, referrals received, jobs produced, date of last referral, and comments.
- Agents that you are already working with should be entered in this same manner.

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### Focused Marketing

- **Every referral received from these agents is tracked in the database.**
- Even if you don't get an inspection from a quote, a referral is just as important and should be recorded.
- Any marketing contact with an agent should also be tracked in the database, whether it's **face time**, direct mail (SCM Part 2), a holiday gift or something else.

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### Focused Marketing

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- **What makes you memorable when you leave an office?**
- There are lots of folks competing for an agent's attention (inspectors, attorneys, mortgage brokers, etc.)
- You need to make sure your visit will "cut through the clutter."

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### Focused Marketing

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- **A great gimmick can make you memorable:**
- Marketing a service that's often seen as a commodity can benefit from something unique and recognizable.
- The gimmick should not be expensive, offensive or outlandish.
- Pens and key chains aren't worthwhile so save your marketing \$\$\$.

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### Focused Marketing

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- **Five gimmicks to make you memorable**
- 1. **A unique, handmade gift**
- There are many craft items that are inexpensive and easy to make.
- People often have more appreciation for something handmade.
- These can also be left on an agent's desk with a business card.

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### Focused Marketing

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- **Five gimmicks to make you memorable**
- 2. **Leave something humorous**
- An inoffensive joke, cartoon, funny story or funny photo with your company name and contact information on it.
- People always love humor.
- Plenty of material is easily located on the internet (beware of copyrights).

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### Focused Marketing

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- **Five gimmicks to make you memorable**
- 3. **Leave a puzzle or riddle**
- Also easily located on the internet.
- Leave a copy for everyone in the office.
- Run a monthly promotion: the first 5 people to contract you with the correct answer win a prize (gift cards, gas cards, etc.).

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### Focused Marketing

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- **Five gimmicks to make you memorable**
- 4. **Send "thank you" notes**
- Sent to every agent after the first time you've had a nice chat with them.
- You appreciate their time and you want their referrals. They've almost certainly never received a thank you note for just talking to a home inspector.

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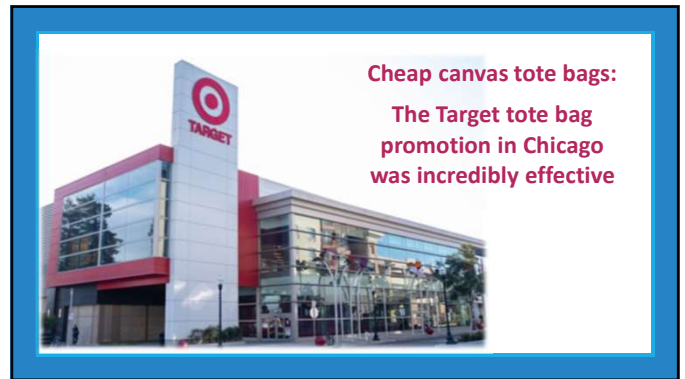
### Focused Marketing

▪ **Five gimmicks to make you memorable**

5. Canvas tote bag with your logo

- Tote bags are available online for \$129 for 100 bags printed with your artwork (one color) – only \$1.29/bag!
- Nobody ever discards a tote bag.
- If you give out enough of those, you'll start to see them around town.

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### Focused Marketing

▪ **Gimmicks only work if there is a message behind it that is important to the agent.**

▪ Pat Tilley, group creative director at advertising agency DDB Chicago said:

*"You can go into a room in a gorilla suit, and everybody will look, but you better say something they care about or you're just an idiot in a gorilla suit."*

147

### Focused Marketing

▪ **20 techniques to make you memorable**

1. Introduce yourself to others. No matter where you are, act like you're the host. Be the first to say hello.
2. Make an extra effort to remember people's names. As Dale Carnegie said, "The sweetest sound to a person is their name."
3. Use eye contact and smile upon meeting someone. The best way to build rapport is through eye contact.

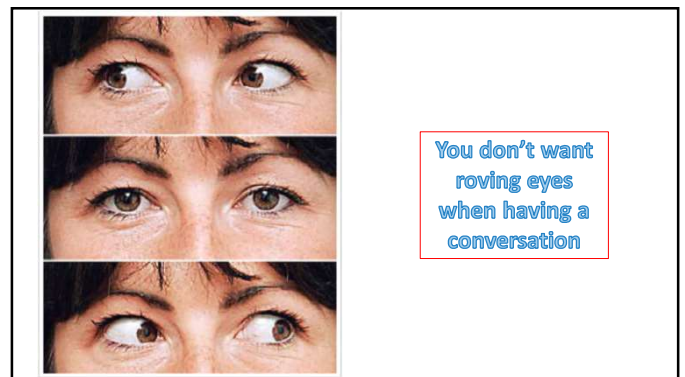
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### Focused Marketing

▪ **20 techniques to make you memorable**

4. Make everyone feel important by paying full attention to him or her. Make them feel like they are the only person in the room.
5. Show curiosity and interest in others.
6. Show others that you are enjoying your conversation with them. Don't yawn, look bored, or have a case of roving eyes.

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### Focused Marketing

▪ 20 techniques to make you memorable

- 7. Listen, listen, listen. You not only become more likeable, but you really start to understand what the person is about.
- 8. Be enthusiastic about things and life to others. People will gravitate toward others who are upbeat, positive and cheerful.
- 9. Display your sense of humor. People remember humor six times longer than regular conversation.

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### Focused Marketing

▪ 20 techniques to make you memorable

- 10. Be able to speak on a variety of subjects. Keep abreast of current events.
- 11. Speak concisely. Be able to tell your story in a few short sentences.
- 12. Speak their language. Talk in terms of their communication style. For example, if someone just wants the facts, don't go into a lot of stories and anecdotes.

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### Focused Marketing

▪ 20 techniques to make you memorable

- 13. Be tolerant of people's beliefs if they are different from yours.
- 14. Ask them for their opinions.
- 15. Don't interrupt them.
- 16. Be yourself. Enjoy the conversation.
- 17. Give them more than they expect. In other words, underpromise and overdeliver.

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### Focused Marketing

▪ 20 techniques to make you memorable

- 18. Compliment others about what they are doing or saying, but be sincere.
- 19. Try to find a common bond (kids, personal interests, etc.).
- 20. Invite people to join you for lunch, dinner and other social events.

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### Focused Marketing

Posture is important

Have positive body language. Use the **SOFTEN** technique.

- S = Smile
- O = Open posture
- F = Forward lean
- T = stay out of their Territory
- E = Eye contact
- N = Nod to show understanding

155

### Focused Marketing

▪ Getting into real estate offices:

- Be a name dropper – if you do well at other near-by real estate offices, don't be bashful about it.
- Use other connections (brokers, office managers) to get into sister offices.

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## Believing in Yourself

- Six characteristics of a successful entrepreneur:
  1. **Has a lot of energy**
  2. **Willing to try new things**
  3. **Likes working with people**
  4. **Is not easily discouraged**
  5. **Is well organized**
  6. **Likes to take charge**

157

## Focused Marketing

- **4) Is not easily discouraged**
- Relax – don't take it so seriously – it's only a conversation, not life and death
- "No" right now does not mean "no" forever – relationships take time to build – you need a little patience.

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159

## Focused Marketing

- **Real estate agent marketing:**
- Learn as much as you can about each contact, then make careful notes as soon as you can before you forget (kids' names, interests, dislikes, etc.).
- Remember, the gatekeeper and the broker are also contacts, even if they don't directly refer you (keep notes!).

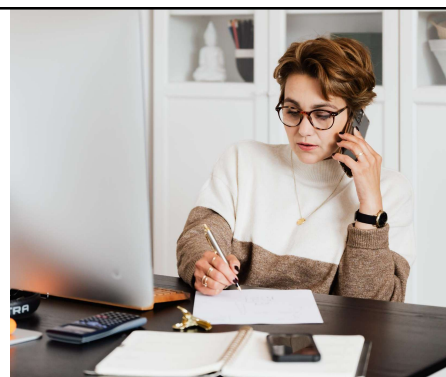
160

## Focused Marketing

- **Real estate agent marketing:**
- Use a standard form (paper or digital) for each office to make notes.
- Some of the info will go into your marketing database, but always keep the paper or digital form in a file.
- Whenever you go marketing, bring the files for each office.

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Jotting down a few notes sometimes feels like the hardest part of the job



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### Focused Marketing

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- **Real estate agent marketing:**
  - Besides having “your story” in place, develop a list of common questions an agent may ask you:  
“What do you charge?”, “Are you new?”, or “What is your background?”
  - Create good “scripted” answers for these questions, so you’ll be ready for them (but don’t read from the script!).

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### Focused Marketing

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- **Real estate agent marketing:**
  - If someone asks you something you don’t have a good answer for, just do the best you can.
  - Be sure to write that question down when you get back to your car, and develop a better answer for the next time it comes up.

164

### Focused Marketing

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- **What agents want from home inspectors (from real estate trainer Elizabeth Fuestel):**
  - Consistency in style and content
  - No surprises
  - Focus on the facts
  - Non-alarming communication
  - Professional clothing
  - Professional report

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### Focused Marketing

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- **What impresses agents (from Elizabeth Fuestel):**
  - Newer, clean auto with your logo
  - 2 pairs of shoes
  - Tarp to protect floors or clothes in closets
  - “Cool” tools
  - Look sharp and clean
  - Inspect with respect and consideration



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### Focused Marketing

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- **What not to say at an inspection (from Elizabeth Fuestel):**
  - “Realtors® are the deep pockets here.”
  - “Talk to the Realtor® about getting the seller to pay for this...”
  - “This is not a bad home.”
  - “If you buy this house...”
  - “You’ll want to negotiate this...”

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### Focused Marketing

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- **Another effective strategy is to develop your own “home grown” agents.**
  - Instead of trying to force into existing relationships that experienced agents already have with others, it’s often easier to hook up with newer agents, just getting started, and with no real loyalty to any inspectors yet.
  - About 10% of new agents will turn into top producers.

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## Focused Marketing

- **Execution over the long haul**
- Divide your marketing region into "zones."
- Use the database to track your marketing activities by zone: when you have an inspection in "Zone 3," then bring your marketing records and materials for "Zone 3." Before or after the inspection, get some "Zone 3" **face time**.
- You should visit every office in your plan at least once every 10 days to two weeks.

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## Focused Marketing

- **Execution over the long haul**
- Every week you should review your database: compare the inspections generated with your activities and by marketing zones, offices and agents.
- If you're just not getting much out of an office after 4 to 6 months of solid marketing, then drop it and try the next one down on your original list of offices.

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## Focused Marketing

- **Execution over the long haul**
- If you get a lot of referrals from an agent but not many inspections, you'll see this in the database and can try to find out why (maybe they also refer a cheaper inspector or you're not their *preferred* inspector).
- Make adjustments: marketing time and money is scarce and must be spent wisely.

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## Focused Marketing

- **You need to spend money to make money!!**
- Your marketing budget should be at least 3% and up to 8% of your annual gross. This includes business cards, brochures, flyers, gifts, mailings, food, lunches, etc.
- It does not include your time.

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## Focused Marketing

- **Staying in real estate offices:**
- Visit each office every two to three weeks.
- Feed the Realtors® (pretzel jars, donuts).
- Become an affiliate member of your local Board of Realtors®, and join the Education Committee.
- Participate in Realtor® functions (board events, golf outings, etc.) and mingle at the dinner parties that follow.

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## Focused Marketing

- **Staying in real estate offices:**
  - Ask the broker or office manager to allow you to present at an office meeting.
  - Most real estate offices have these weekly, but they may not admit it (although Re/Max usually does not).
  - You might have to be persistent to get into a meeting.

175

## Believing in Yourself

- Six characteristics of a successful entrepreneur:
  1. **Has a lot of energy**
  2. **Willing to try new things**
  3. **Likes working with people**
  4. **Is not easily discouraged**
  5. **Is well organized**
  6. **Likes to take charge**

176

## Focused Marketing

- **Office meetings:**
  - Be confident, practice your speaking skills (here's where Toastmasters pays off).
  - Greet the agents as they arrive.
  - Bring GOOD FOOD – ask the office manager AND the gatekeeper what the agents like – and bring some of both!
  - Keep your presentation short, and NEVER exceed your allotted time.

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## Focused Marketing

### Office meeting topics:

Seller's top fears regarding the inspection.

How your service can be of help to the agents (inspection style, report format).

Current events in the inspection world that might affect agents.

Home inspection myths.

Most common home defects.

Always weave your story into these topics.

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## Focused Marketing

- **Office meetings:**
  - Prepare and hand out an agenda
  - Pass out testimonials from other agents.
  - Use props – tools, laptops, handhelds.
  - Have a sample report to pass around (but NEVER use a real report – make one up).
  - At the end, thank everybody for listening and ask for their referrals.
  - Hang around and mingle, if possible.

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## Focused Marketing 📺

- **Holiday gifts (not Christmas gifts!)**
- This is very much a multi-cultural society. You know your area so be careful with “Christmas” cards or gifts.
- Giving “thank you” or “kick off” gifts to your top referral sources in the first week of January will be noticed far more than in December. Nobody gets a gift in January!!

181

## Focused Marketing 📺

- **Holiday gifts (not Christmas gifts!)**
- We discovered the January gift idea accidentally one year.
- Gifts delivered in December generated only couple of thank-you messages, but gifts delivered in January generated “thank you’s” from about 75% of recipients.



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## Focused Marketing 📺

- **Holiday gifts (not Christmas gifts!)**
- We recommend giving a nicer gift (boxes of cashews, food baskets, etc.) to the top 10% of your referral base.
- Make sure that agents not getting a gift do not see you handing these out.
- Delivering gifts to the agent’s home is a better idea, if possible.

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## Focused Marketing

- **Consistency and repetition work**
- You must present a common message throughout *ALL* of your marketing activities (face time, printed, website).
- There are a lot of other effective ways to generate inspections (SCM Part 2) but **face time** is the very best way. **Your face is your brand.**
- Don’t let up on your marketing plan after getting some inspections (out of sight, out of mind).

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## Focused Marketing

- **Another benefit of focused marketing**
- *You can control* where you work and what kind of inspections you get.
- There are some referrals you really don’t want (especially as you build and get busier).
- Focus on your efforts on those sources that provide what you want (avoid the “shot gun” approach).

185

## Supercharged Marketing

- Remember: every day that you don’t do any real marketing is another day farther behind your energetic competitors.
- No marketing opportunity is ever “lost,” because it’s always taken by someone (why not you?).
- **It’s entirely within your power to do as many inspections as you want.**

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