



# 2015 REALTORS® Open House Weekend June 6 – 7, 2015



## 6 Ways to Capture Clients at Open Houses

*Try these tips for turning your open houses into a dependable flow of income for your business.*

By: Rich Levin

If you're getting ready to hold an open house, lock the door. And forget about programming all your visitors' numbers on your phone's speed dial: You never want to call them back.

That may not sound like your traditional advice for holding open houses. After all, isn't the idea to land more clients—not to mention, a buyer for the listing? But this unconventional strategy can work. Here's why.

Open houses are the perfect opportunity to expand your potential buyer pool. But if you're not careful, you may come across as too pushy, and that can be a quick turnoff that sends buyers running for the door. (No, that's not the reason you should lock it. I'll get to that shortly.)

Try these six tips to make open houses a more effective business tool.

### **Rule #1: Never plan on calling people later.**

Instead of telling visitors you'll give them a call afterwards to follow up, you should use the valuable in-person time at the open house to say what you need to say. You're much more likely to make a stronger impression face-to-face than during a phone call at a later time. When meeting visitors at open houses, these are the main questions you want them to answer for you:

- Are they interested in the property?
- What other properties may be of interest to them? What are they looking for?
- Will they be willing to set up an appointment to talk further with you, or are they interested in viewing additional properties that may be a better fit?

Note, there is an exception to the no-callback rule: When you have a crowded open house, you may not have enough time to talk with everyone. In this case, it may make sense to pick up the phone and ask if they needed any additional information.





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## **Rule #2: Welcome visitors at the door.**

The best way to welcome visitors to the open house: Lock the door. Neither you nor the owners want people walking into the house unannounced. This won't only ensure you get to talk to everyone who wanders in but it's also a safety issue. (Read: 9 Open House Safety Tips)

Try this approach:

- Greet people at the door.
- Welcome and thank them for coming.
- Hand them information on the property.
- As they look at the information, talk about a special feature or two in the home that they may want to notice as they go through the property.
- Ask for their name, phone number, and e-mail address, or have them fill out an open house register so you'll have their contact information. If they decline to give you their contact information (and they don't appear threatening), you should still let them view the property. You'll find most visitors are willing to give you their contact information.
- Explain that there is additional information about the listing on the dining room or kitchen table that may be of interest to them.

## **Rule #3: Stage your informational packets.**

The dining room or kitchen table can be a great spot to capture visitors' attention with extra information about the listing. Place a variety of items here, such as property details, school information, and community brochures. Don't forget to attach a bold label (in 24- to 48-point font) with your contact information on each type of information you provide.

The goal is to get visitors to pause and look at these resources, encourage them to speak with you, and build your credibility as an important resource—not only about the listing, but about the community too.

## **Rule #4: Approach visitors during the walk-through.**

After you've allowed visitors to wander through the house on their own, you'll want to catch up to them and see if they have any questions and gauge what they like or dislike. Approach carefully; you don't want to be a pest. This can be your prime chance to land them as a client.

## **Rule #5: Get the house in showing-shape.**

You'll want the house looking its best outside and in. Instruct your sellers to trim shrubs, unclutter rooms, shampoo rugs, add a fresh coat of paint, check the home's smell (Tip: Try fresh-baked cookies for a welcoming scent), and clean





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absolutely everything. (Provide sellers with a helpful checklist: "18 Simple Tips for Better Home Showings," part of REALTOR® Magazine's Handouts for Customers.)

Here's what *you* can do to prepare:

- Send invitations to the neighborhood and to anyone in your sphere of influence who lives in the area.
- Arrive early on open house day, turn on all the lights, open the curtains, and have soft, relaxing music playing in the background.
- Display signs throughout the house that point to special features: "Look down, hardwood floors"; "Gas fireplace, push this button"; and "Walk-in closet, walk in." These can help distinguish your listing as well as make it easier for you to engage visitors about certain qualities of the house.

### **Rule #6: Choose your open houses carefully.**

Avoid holding an open house just because your seller wants it or another practitioner asks you to. Typically, open houses that garner the most traffic are newer listings, reasonably priced, and easy to access from main roads.

When you invest the time and energy into conducting an open house, you'll be able to turn them into much more than just a neighbor snoop-fest. Open houses can serve as a dependable flow of leads for your other listings. And who knows, you may just find the perfect buyer for that listing.

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