

## Seven Steps to Ensure a Strong Finish to the Year

By Rich Levin

Every year, in November and December a flurry of Real Estate Agents contacts me about coaching. They want to be sure that they get a strong start to 2012. Unfortunately, by then it is too late.

In September, summer is ending. Many Agents have lost momentum. Many are returning from vacations and sending children to school. Those Agents who have lost or feel a loss of momentum must consciously decide to do the following or suffer the consequences.

Either:

1. Step up activity and focus on finishing the calendar year strong
2. Make no decision and coast.

The latter, coasting, is very costly, doubly costly. It leads to both a slow finish to this year, little or no commissions and a slow start to sales next year.

In September and October there is a flurry of activity, even in a softer year, like this one.

But this year, in particular, it is natural to think that the softness is the market and that it is out of your control. There is the "debt crisis," the election campaigning, political gridlock, high unemployment, the "shadow inventory," and more that could feed an Agent's thought and feelings that they are not in control.

Be clear and beware. Thinking, "It's out of my control." is dangerous to your career, your wallet and it is incorrect.

Even if the sales activity in your market is down by a large percentage (40% would be huge and in most markets it's nowhere near that. That leaves 60% for you). There are still dozens, hundreds, or thousands of sales that will occur. So, there are always two or three sales every month for any individual Agent, for you.

Will you get yours or will you allow your mindset and your attitude to cost you months of low income, frustration, and aggravation?

Here are seven surefire, guaranteed ways for you to have a strong finish to 2011 and ensure a strong start to 2012.

1. **Get active.** Call the leads that you already have, old leads and new leads. Hold Open Houses. Go to fall picnics, clambakes, school events, anywhere that you will see people that know you are in Real Estate. Visit or call past Clients. Call on Expireds and For Sale by Owners. Be active every working weekday.

Have "talking points" handy; lowest rates in decades, and softer prices (for Buyers). Less money buys more house (1% of interest rate = 12% of buying power) and that won't be true forever. It may change quickly. When it does, the Buyer may have to buy less house or a different, lower priced neighborhood. Share the concept that Real Estate markets are local and you know what is going on in your market. The soft economy creates tremendous opportunity.



2. **Don't get sloppy** or inconsistent with your prospecting and marketing. Or if you have been sloppy about it during the year, then tighten it up for the next sixty days. (You'll have built a better habit after sixty days that will continue.)
3. **Be consistent.** Look at what has been working best this year in your business and be sure to keep doing that. This is the time for consistency. This is not the time to start a new venture unless you are also able to keep your consistency and momentum.
4. **Be cautious** to start new campaign until later in the fall. Or if you are going to start a new campaign, be sure to also keep doing what has worked best. If your direct marketing has been generating a good response, stay consistent with it to the end of the year. If your social media, blogging, craigslist, search engine optimization or your Ad Words campaign has been generating lucrative leads then keep up that campaign. Prospecting activity, networking, open houses, past Client calls, whatever has been working for you, choose to stay consistent with it through early December.
5. **Follow up** on leads is crucial during this time. Follow up more conscientiously on leads. Use the phone not just e-mail. Get back to everyone that said they wanted to wait. See if waiting is still in their plans or if they are ready. Share talking points. All Agents have a flow of leads that have been in a holding pattern for one reason or another. Now is the perfect time to touch base with them.
6. **Keep up or start up your marketing;** direct mail and/or web. Send at least two mailings between now and year's end. Whether you e-mail blast, blog, are active on social media, or optimize your search positioning organically or sponsored; keep it up or start it up, now.
7. **Have monthly goals and an annual goal** for this year. Set goals for how much business you will put in contract each month to the end of this year. (Then in December set the same for all of next year.) Remind yourself of your annual sales goal. If it is out of whack based on what you have done so far this year, then adjust it and then keep it in front of you for the rest of the year.

In our coaching practice we look at Agent's monthly production for the past three years. Lower production in the last three or four months of the year is so common that you might think it is inevitable. But when an Agent sees this pattern of weakness between September and December, and they take the above actions they always, always have their best year end ever. It happens every time. It can happen for you, too.

The September Decision is to get active and stay active into mid December. Real Estate is and will continue to be one of the greatest professions in the world. So this month get focused and make this crucial decision that will affect your business and your life.

Rich Levin is a Master Coach and Real Agent Productivity Expert. He can coach you to success through the end of the year and far beyond. For coaching information you can contact him at 585-244-2700 or [Rich@RichLevin.com](mailto:Rich@RichLevin.com). You can hear him live every weekday on his free Daily Coaching webinars. Register at [www.FreeCoachingWebinars.com](http://www.FreeCoachingWebinars.com).