

IF YOU'VE NEVER: IDENTIFIED AND BUILT YOUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Your sphere of influence includes everyone who knows you or knows of you because you're already connected in some way, whether as colleagues, family, friends, coaches, former classmates, people at places of worship or in social groups, or the people whom those people know. Working your sphere of influence is far more effective than working cold leads. If you've never built your sphere of influence before, here are some ways to start.

- Build your social media presence. Post regularly about your business and your life in general so that your sphere knows what you are up to. Like and comment on other people's posts.
- Talk to people. Make conversation with the grocery store cashier, the people in your fitness class, the receptionist at your doctor's office, your children's teachers or coaches, or other parents at a game. Ask them something about themselves, and share what you do.
- Join a networking group. Getting to know people involved in different local businesses both expands your sphere and provides useful contacts for many situations.
- Volunteer at community functions. Help plan a fundraiser, run a registration table, and contribute to your community while wearing your real estate swag and name badge.
- Leave your card everywhere: at coffee shops, when you pay a restaurant bill, or take your car in for service, you never know where you'll meet someone who needs your services.
- Network with other real estate agents. Other agents can be a great source of information, support, referrals, mentors and friendship.

WHAT NEXT? ONCE YOU MAKE CONTACT WITH PEOPLE, GATHER THEIR INFORMATION.

- Enter what you have into a customer relationship management system (CRM), such as Lone Wolf, Propertybase, or your brokerage's CRM, that will help you keep track of your contacts and schedule follow-up. Whether you have an email address, social media handle, phone number, home address or something else, it's a place to start. If your brokerage doesn't have a CRM, Excel or Google spreadsheets work, too.
- Start to build profiles for each person with full contact information, how you know them, birthdays, anniversaries, names of spouses, pets or children, and whatever else is relevant to your business. Knowing these details will help you not only remember the person, but also will impress them when you ask about them during your next interaction. For example, if the last time you spoke they mentioned their pet or children, ask how they're doing and mention them by name.
- Consider adding fields in your database to indicate whether a contact is a personal or professional one; lead vs. current client; local vs. out-of-town; online vs IRL; close contact vs. acquaintance; likely to buy soon vs. more long-term, etc.
- Reach out to your sphere of influence. Select a few each week to call on the phone for a personal conversation. Don't rush these conversations, be genuine and cordial. Not every conversation should be about business; the idea is to keep you top of mind.

- Once you've made contact, offer something of value. That could be a monthly or quarterly email or newsletter, updating your sphere on the current market. Or it could be free home valuations in exchange for email or a phone number.
- Create a regular cadence of communication that works for you and your contacts, to keep building those relationships.

