

SELL WHAT IT DOES, NOT WHAT IT IS



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# RealtySuccess

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## How to Become Huge in Real Estate

eNeighborhoods' CEO Stu Siegel on the importance of being a neighborhood expert





# How to Become Huge in Real Estate

There is more to being a successful real estate agent than focusing on the listing alone. Real Estate agents are wizards at navigating their MLS System, know all about financing, inspections and contracts, and are in tune with the overall real estate market. Most have dynamite interpersonal skills. But there is one area where many have a great opportunity to hone their expertise. Neighborhood information and how it pertains to potential buyers is an area where the true experts wield quite an advantage over those who don't have that knowledge.

Neighborhood information is an important aspect of any home-buying decision. A solid grasp on the key points of a neighborhood will serve as a valuable tool in winning the battle to make sales. A recent National Association of REALTORS® profile of home buyers and sellers indicates that two thirds of all home buyers cited "the neighborhood" as the most important factor in choosing the location of their recent purchase.

People identify two categories of information when they are looking for a home: specifics about the property itself and specifics about the neighborhood. Which of the following scenarios is more likely to result in a deal:



"Here is the house you want, but the crime rate in the neighborhood is a little high, and the schools are some of the worst around," or "This house is a little smaller than you wanted, but the schools are top notch, and it is conveniently located." Home buyers are more likely to compromise on the house than neighborhood it is in. Real estate professionals often focus too much on the physical characteristics of a property. A prospective homebuyer is envisioning whether the property will work for their needs as they are seeing it, so reiterating the number of bathrooms or square footage isn't necessarily helpful. Telling them about the neighborhood the property is located in is going to help. It eliminates some of the additional questions the prospective buyer is going to have before deciding to make an offer. An agent can shine in the buyer's eyes by providing insight beyond what is provided in the listing information.

The value of neighborhood data isn't confined to impressing buyers either. Who is a seller going to want to list with - an agent with a solid understanding of the neighborhood surrounding the property, or one without? The agent that shows up to a listing presentation with a full color CMA report that includes detailed property and neighborhood data, or the one with a "CMA" made up of a few MLS printouts? These are easy choices. As an agent you want to be the easy choice. Having a solid understanding of

the surrounding neighborhood will help win you more listings by making the sellers feel confident in your knowledge and experience in the area.

Neighborhood information is important, but what kind of data is available? For example, a neighborhood report provides the following information:

- Median income in the neighborhood
- The percentage of people in the neighborhood that have children
- The percentage of married and single adults in the neighborhood
- The percentage of college graduates in the neighborhood
- The average travel time to work for people in the neighborhood

There is also a wealth of important information on schools. Every parent an agent encounters is interested in finding out about area schools. The following school information is also in a neighborhood report:

- The name, address and phone number of public and private schools in the district
- The percentage of enrollment in private schools
- Number of students enrolled
- Student-teacher ratios
- Expenditures per student
- Source of funding
- Average SAT scores
- Average ACT scores
- Number of National Merit Finalists

That is exactly the type of information people with children want to know. It provides an overview of the area, plus the information they need for further research of specific schools.

Beyond demographics and statistical information, neighborhood maps are also

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useful. Whether it is a map an agent can use to identify local points of interest or an aerial image giving a true picture of the neighborhood, these tools enable an agent to give additional details to their clients. Customizing a map to the specific interests of the client is a great way to give them the lay of the land. An agent can add identifiers and notations for nearby shopping areas, houses of worship, distances to highways and other points of interest. Aerial images are also effective especially for pointing out nearby parks, golf courses and bodies of water. Together with a report on demographics, maps and aerial images can really help flesh out a neighborhood overview.

There is a myriad of information about neighborhoods available, and a good solution will also incorporate MLS data. Adding home-sale data - pulled from local county recording offices and the active, pending, expired and sold listings from an MLS - gives a comprehensive picture of any neighborhood. The local recorder data is an important addition because it will capture information about new construction and FSBOs, data that is not available through an MLS. This blending of both property and neighborhood data is what provides a great advantage to the agent armed with such powerful marketing tools.

Just as important as having access to pertinent data is the way you display and present it. Handing over a pile of paper with columns and rows of statistics will serve only to confuse a potential buyer. You need to turn this data into presentable information. By providing sellers and buyers with this information in an easily understood format, you will increase your business.

Personalized reports are a must to make sure consumers know you are their neighborhood expert. High-impact reports also include the kind of visually stimulating graphics that

make the data readable. There are better ways to present neighborhood information than with rows and rows of data. Rather than stacks of paper with lots of confusing rows and columns of unorganized data, consumers will respond to simple charts and graphs that allow them to see and make sense of the data immediately. The detailed neighborhood data, blended with MLS information, and presented with colorful, easy-to-read graphics is an unbeatable combination for helping build your business to the level you want to achieve. Your clients will remember and share with others how easily they were able to select a neighborhood with you. This will result in an increase both repeat and referral business.

Presenting the right charts, colors and page layouts to display neighborhood data is vital. Using easily understood informative, high impact, colorful reports for presentations with clients and prospects is a powerful tool that will show you know what it takes to be their neighborhood expert. By implementing a solution that provides you these tools, your business will grow immediately. Becoming a neighborhood expert is part of a winning strategy to take your business to the next level.

## *How High is Your Neighborhood IQ?*

If you would like to learn more about neighborhood data and how it can help you, "become huge in real estate," contact eNeighborhoods at [request@eneighborhoods.com](mailto:request@eneighborhoods.com) for their special report - Raising Your Neighborhood IQ.

*eNeighborhoods can be contacted at 866.405.5955 x2, or by e-mail at [eN@realtysuccessonline.com](mailto:eN@realtysuccessonline.com).*

Neighborhood information will give you a distinct advantage in getting listings and selling more homes. When looking for a neighborhood information solution, the following things are important.

- A compilation of home and neighborhood information
- A comprehensive set of personal marketing tools
- Up to date information to present to both buyers and sellers
- Localized information about property, neighborhoods and schools
- Quick and easy access to detailed information
- Facts about schools, home values, crime rates, cost-of-living and other demographics
- Colorful easy to understand presentations that can be printed, e-mailed or linked to a Web site

Industry leaders are already using neighborhood information to sell more homes. The following are just a few of the industry leading companies that are currently using neighborhood data

- Cendant
- Century 21
- Coldwell Banker
- ERA
- Exit Realty
- GMAC
- Help-U-Sell
- Keller Williams
- Prudential
- Realty Executives
- RE/MAX
- As well as many independent brokerages