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For Real Estate Professionals

Who COACHES and MENTORS



the MENTORS and COACHES?

Plus

Keep Your Team from Bleeding Profit

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CEO's Message

Ginny Shipe

CAE, AHWD, C-RETS, RENE



Getting Energized by Change

The housing affordability crunch is here. Mortgage rates are continuing to rise in concert with rising housing prices. Some agents and brokers will panic and emphatically profess that the sky is falling. Don't listen to them. Savvy real estate professionals are equipped with the tools, knowledge, and resources to navigate changing market conditions. They know how to communicate and demonstrate their value to consumers. Now, more than ever, this is paramount.

It's time to put the work in and make sure you are working your business plan. If you don't have one, you better get started. Success continues to be a delicate balance between leading and following.

There are people, like Babbitt, from the famous novel by Sinclair Lewis, who flock around the status quo and defend it heartily. And there are others who thrive by living on the edge. They enjoy taking chances and are energized by change. And, of course, there are people who are most comfortable with the middle-of-the-road approach.

Here are a few ideas that you would do well to consider in 2022 and beyond.

Leadership Ideas

- Meet with people under 25 years old regularly.
- Eat, sleep, breathe — ooze — integrity.
- "I don't know" is the most important phrase for a leader.
- Beware of the tyranny of making small changes to small things. Rather, make big changes to big things.

Management Ideas

- Don't think you can change people and gain converts. Hire for attitude, train for skill.
- Fire the merchants of doom and gloom. One person can pollute the environment.
- Only the constant pursuit of innovation can ensure long-term success.
- You can't shrink your way to greatness.

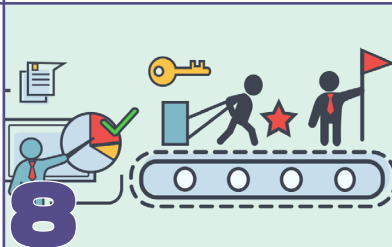
Strategy Ideas

- Your calendar doesn't lie. It shows what matters to you.
- Recommit to nifty acts.
- Some people look for things that went wrong and try to fix them. It is better to look for things that went right and build off them.
- Incrementalism is innovation's worst enemy.

Set aside some time to read the features and columns in this issue of REB magazine. You will find ideas and resources covering a myriad of business building and leadership topics. Continue to invest in your professional development and turn that learning into action. Reach out to your fellow CRB and SRS designees in our virtual communities. We are a vibrant community of talented professionals; willing to share knowledge, resources, and lift one another up.

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BROKERS, MANAGERS, TEAMS, AND AGENTS



Who Coaches and Mentors the Mentors and Coaches?

**Where do you — as a broker, manager, or
team leader — go to get advice, guidance,
and professional development?**

By G. M. Filisko

Who Coaches and Mentors the Mentors and Coaches ?

Pause for a second as you try to put out your tenth fire of the day to ask yourself: Am I paying as much attention to my own business success as I am to that of my agents and office staff?

Often, brokers, team leaders, and managers ask that question only *after* they realize their operations aren't performing as they'd hoped. Perhaps their profits are weak or not as strong as they'd projected. Maybe their recruiting isn't humming along, or agents are actually jumping ship. Maybe it's something entirely different—but it's yet another problem that must be fixed.

That's when the uncomfortable "maybe it's something I'm doing" realization surfaces. And that's when it's wise to think about your own skill development.

"We brokers and managers get lost sometimes in making sure everyone else has what they need—giving cutting-edge information and resources to the members of our office team—and get stagnant in what we have for ourselves," reports JoAnne Poole, DSA, ABR, AHWD, CRB, CRS, e-PRO®, GRI, PMN, associate broker and office manager at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Homesale Realty in Baltimore, Md.



**JoAnne Poole, DSA
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BROKER

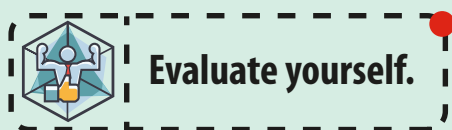
Parks Realty
Smyrna, Tenn.

"I think that sometimes managers and brokers can't seem to manage both," states Mary Chieppa, ABR, C-RETS, GRI, MRP, PSA, RENE, SRS, associate broker at Coldwell Banker Realty Mid-Atlantic in Ellicott City, Md. "If they're really dealing well with retention and taking care of their agents, they're often not upping their own game. It's hard to keep yourself on the cutting edge and to bring others along on the ride with you."

Robert Morris, ABR, ABRM, AHWD, CRB, CRS, C-RETS, GRI, e-PRO®, MRP, PMN, PSA, RENE, SFR, SRES®, SRS, broker at Parks Realty in Smyrna, Tenn, has seen a similar phenomenon. "When we talk about business training courses, some brokers don't take them," says the instructor for [REBI's Performance Leadership: Coach Manage & Mentor](#) course, in addition to the NAR L.E.A.D. Vision course. "Some were agents who didn't want to work for someone, so they opened up their own firm where they often have to sell, and they help agents. But they're really not brokering and managing their company."

"We've had more violations of NAR's Code of Ethics under the broker supervision category than anything in the past few years," he says. "The lack of broker supervision is a big deal."

Where can you go to get management and leadership skills, advice, and support from others experiencing the same challenges as you? Well, obviously, we'd suggest your first stop be the wide range of courses REBI offers. When you're done with those, make your way through these suggestions.



Evaluate yourself.

Your first step in figuring out how to improve your professional proficiency is identifying what you're doing well and where you need skill building.

"You have to be able to do a self-assessment," says

Debora Weidman-Phillips, ABR®, CRB, Green,

SFR, manager and associate broker at Long & Foster Real Estate in Blue Bell, Pa., who also oversees offices in New Jersey. "I know where my strengths and my weaknesses area. I also know what part of the job I love to do and the other parts I don't like."



DEBORA WEIDMAN-PHILLIPS
ABR®, CRB, GREEN, SFR

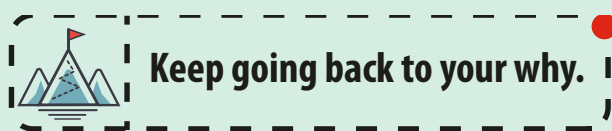
ASSOCIATE BROKER/MANAGER

Long & Foster Real Estate

Blue Bell, Pa.

Morris agrees. "To thine own self you have to be true," he says. "Start with a SWOT self-analysis evaluating your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. We teach that in the business side of REBI courses. Also, there are any number of personality profiles you can take for yourself so you know what you are, where you hang out, and how you get along with other individuals."

Caution: Be careful relying exclusively on tests to figure yourself out. "I did the DiSC and other tests for myself," says Weidman-Phillips. "Feel free, but take those with a grain of salt because that's not the only thing you should rely on. I'm not a big fan of pigeonholing people by test. I think it would be important to take it for yourself, but when I took mine, there weren't any big surprises."



Keep going back to your why.

"When I do mentoring and coaching with agents, I'm always coming back to: 'Why did you decide this was the best thing for you do to?'" explains Poole. "Everybody decides to open a brokerage for different reasons—some for ego, some because they wanted to help other people grow, some because they got frustrated with the manager they were with, or some for other reasons.

"Figure out the why to figure out if you're in the right spot," she advises. "Once you understand that, you can say, 'I need help with this.'"

Morris couldn't agree more. "Let's start with our why," he suggests. "What are you doing this for, anyway, and what's the end result you want to get from those efforts at self-improvement and business development? There are sundry things you can do to improve. But often you first have to have a self-realization that things aren't going the way you want them to go."



Take courses you encourage your agents to take.

“Make sure before you introduce some course to your team that you take it with the team if you can’t take it prior to then,” suggests Poole. “I think it’s a benefit. Most leaders feel like they already know the answers, and they know what each course is going to do. But in everything we do, there’s always a learning opportunity.”

“We learn things we didn’t know about,” she adds. “We learn about old things but also new and creative ways to get them done. And we learn about the way we engage with people, because new people may not want to engage with us in the way we’ve been engaging.”

“As you’re learning and growing, it’s also building confidence in what you’re doing,” says Pool. “It’s building your own confidence, which is really important. That comes across to other people. Otherwise, it’s like you’re saying the words, but others aren’t sure if *you* even really believe them.”

Don’t ever underestimate the power of confidence in your personal growth and career trajectory, advises Weidman-Phillips. “As a manager, you have to figure out how to get along with people,” she explains. “It took me years to figure this out, but it’s best that you don’t work with some people. It could even be a top performer. If they’re taking a majority of your time, look the plusses and minuses, and you’ll often find it doesn’t make sense.”

“Build your own strength enough that you’re willing to say no to people who damage your company,” she states. “Too many brokers manage out of fear. They think, ‘If I lose this person, the brokerage is going to fire me.’”

“Often, when you get rid of that kind of person, everybody else in the office knew long ago they needed to go, and you’re fooling yourself if you don’t think that,” says Weidman-Phillips. “When you stop working with somebody who’s harming your team, everybody pays attention, and most people will thank you.”



Search for an accountability partner

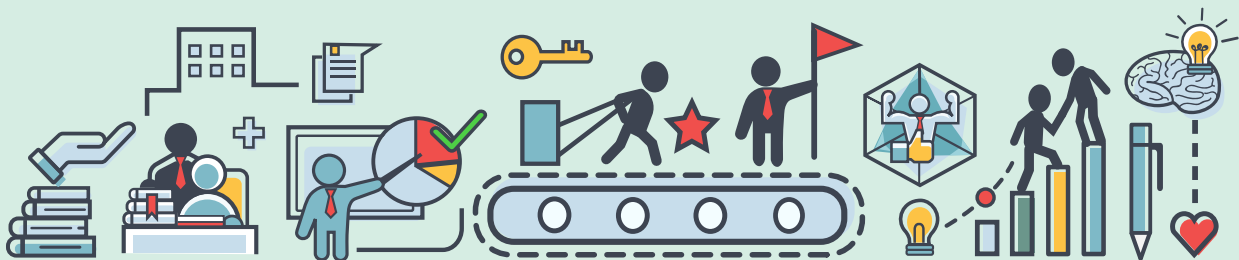
“Finding a broker you can bounce ideas off of would be great,” says Morris. “But the brokers with the egos would probably back away from mentors because they feel like they don’t need them.”

“Also, buzzwords like *mentor* kind of trigger people, so I’d suggest finding an accountability partner instead of a mentor,” he adds. “What you’re saying is that you have another broker in another location you can run ideas by. Many brokers could benefit from creating an accountability partner network of brokers from outside their area they could pose questions to.”

“Poole notes that many people also don’t like the word *accountability*. “I do,” she says. “I think you’re accountable to each other. That’s the trust builder.”

Note that Morris and Poole both suggest going outside your market for this type of connection. “The benefit is finding someone not necessarily in your local marketplace,” notes Poole. “Many brokers are absolutely fearful of another broker recruiting their people. But when you get outside your marketplace, those brokers aren’t going to recruit your people, and your fear level drops.”

“By the way, this year NAR has started the Small-Broker Committee to help brokers get more involved in sharing ideas,” she adds. “It’ll meet at [NAR NXT](#) in November.”



COACHING



Chieppa, who's an instructor for many REBI courses and who owns a real estate school, knows you're likely to think, "Nice idea, can't afford it."

But hear her out. "The only reason I have my own real estate school is because I finally got myself a business coach," she explains. All the great ideas I had and the professional I knew I could be existed only in my mind, and she was never going to see the light of day until I got that coach, first for a self-analysis, then to create a plan, and then to implement the plan."

"I'd recommend a business coach even just for quarterly interaction," says Chieppa. "It doesn't have to be higher-end cost wise or to gobble up a ton of your time. But a coach can help you analyze your financials to assess things like whether you're running your operating expense account correctly, whether you have a reasonable profit margin, and whether you're paying your agents way too much."

"An analysis of your numbers would be like taking your temperature," explains Chieppa. "Then at each of the three other meetings during the year, you can address things like recruiting, hiring, and onboarding; then a coaching session on ideas to increase productivity to your agents; and then one on supervision."

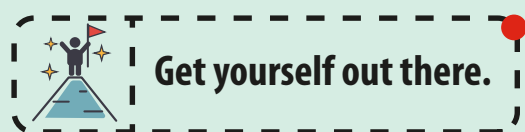
Chieppa suggests caution in choosing a coach. "If you just shop for a coach, you're buying their ideas instead of what you might need," she states. "And they'll often choose a schedule that's more profitable for them, like monthly or weekly. That's why I don't suggest starting with that type of arrangement because it's not customized to my time, budget, and needs."

MENTORING

“Instead, I went to brokerage forums provided by REALTOR® associations and paid attention to the speakers,” says Chieppa. “When I heard one with information I liked—informational, decision data, I mean; I don’t need motivation—and their presentation resonated with me, I asked, ‘Do you do any one-on-one coaching?’ Pay attention to who’s in front of you when you’re shopping for your coach.”

“I’ve become a really big fan of group coaching,” she adds. “For me, with a small group of people sharing expenses, it’s affordable. Also, the group analysis we do isn’t just one person’s input, but it’s really collaborating with people who share your ideas.”

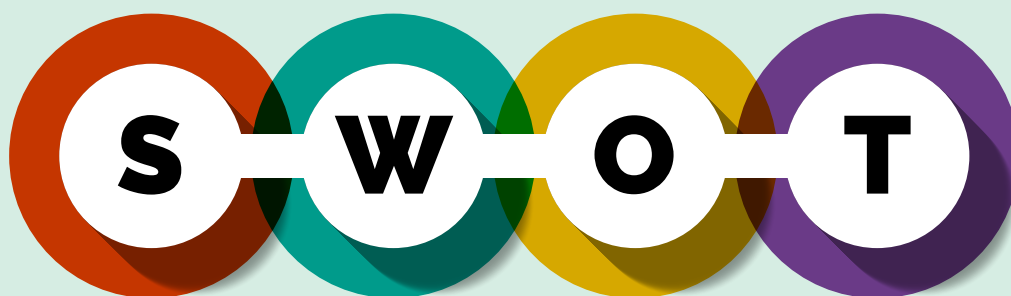
“Don’t pull together five people in the same market because they’ll probably get a bit guarded or reserved,” suggests Chieppa. “Find others outside your market and approach a coach to say, ‘I and two others are interested in accountability meetings; can we do those quarterly with you?’”



Weidman-Phillips remembers how challenging it was for brokers years ago when teams began to gather steam in real estate. “A lot of brokers struggled with how to manage teams,” she recalls. “That’s when I began to go to CRB courses. My office composition was starting to change, and I just knew I didn’t know a lot. And when you interact with people at events like that, you learn who runs their business like you do and whom you can trust with your questions and challenges.”

Morris is also an advocate for becoming involved in organizations like REBI and NAR. “You don’t have to lead a board, but you do need to join and do something,” he asserts. “One of the things we talk about at the REALTORS® Political Action Committee is that if you’re not at the table, you’re on the menu. If they came to a meeting, the networks most brokers and managers could find would be life changing. Get involved in some fashion.”

G.M. Filisko is a lawyer and freelance writer who specializes in real estate, legal, business, and personal finance topics.





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A close-up photograph of a hand wearing a red sleeve, counting a stack of US dollar bills. The bills are fanned out, showing the 'THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA' text. The background is a solid green color.

6 Ways to Keep Your Team from Bleeding Profit



**Making your team more successful
all comes down to planning and
strategizing every step
of your journey.**

By G. M. Filisko

6 Ways to Keep Your Team from Bleeding Profit

Jennifer Booker says she's guilty of this herself—that is, starting a team without doing all the necessary legwork and planning and then losing money as a result.

Now the broker associate who holds the ABR, CRB, C-RETS, CRS, GRI, PSA, RENE, SFR, and SRS designations and certifications is taking a breather and rebuilding with purpose.

"I had a newer agent who was working under me and helping me with my overflow, and I was mentoring and helping her," says Booker, who oversees both commercial and residential divisions at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Realty in Wellington, Fla. "Now I'm looking for someone. I've done this several times—not taking my time in looking for people to add to my team."

"I am now," she adds. "It's taking me a little time to find that person. And I'm fine with it."

Bringing on new team members without a full analysis first is indeed a huge stumbling block for team leaders, reports Jason Robbins, ABR®, AHWD, CRB, C-RETS, e-PRO®, RENE, SRS, broker and team manager of the Ginger Harper Real Estate Group at Coldwell Banker Sea Coast Advantage Realty in Southport, N.C.

"Sometimes just because an agent is talented doesn't mean they're going to be a good fit for your team," he explains. "And that always turns into a money impact on the team or them—or both."



JENNIFER BOOKER
ABR, CRB, C-RETS, CRS,
GRI, PSA, RENE, SFR, SRS

ASSOCIATE BROKER

Berkshire Hathaway
HomeServices Florida
Realty

Wellington, Fla.

"There are many ways to form and operate a team, so there's no one-size-fits-all approach," notes Robbins. "I've studied this because I'm trying to learn and make my own team and practice better."



JASON ROBBINS
ABR®, AHWD, CRB, C-RETS,
e-PRO®, RENE, SRS

**BROKER AND
TEAM MANAGER**

Ginger Harper Real Estate Grp.
Coldwell Banker
Sea Coast
Advantage Realty

Southport, N.C.

Of course, you want to make your own team better, too. One way to do that is to avoid the most common ways team leaders lose money. Let's run through the list.



Be clear on the people part

Before we move onto another mistake that can cost team leaders money, let's flesh out Robbins' point about thinking through the decision to add new people to your team *before* you bring another member on board.

The generally accepted wisdom in the industry today is that agents *need* to create a team and then they *need* to grow their team. Robbins isn't buying it. "If bigger were better, we'd all be on squads of 100," he says. "It doesn't work that way."

When Robbins refers to new team members being a good fit, he's making a broad point, not one about whether everyone enjoys working with each other. "I'm not talking about personality conflicts," he explains. "I'm talking about hiring someone who's going to overlap what you're doing. When you do that, you're really just going to slice the pie into three instead of two pieces or four instead of three, or whatever."

"You have to know what you're going to do with the new team member—meaning what you're going to do and what they're going to do," states Robbins. "You have to run a return-on-

investment analysis even if it's a back-of-the-envelope thing evaluating how your business will be better by adding this person to it. Maybe it pushes the team to cover a new geographic area shuffles the way you're farming or rotate leads, or something else like that."

"My team, over the course of the next few years, will probably need to staff a model home or do other onsite work," he predicts. "To do that well, you often can use warm bodies. That's a perfect opportunity for a brand-new agent trying to learn the business. Maybe you do want to add them for that purpose."

"So you need to ask what these recruits are bringing and what you're offering them," adds Robbins. "It's not so much what the answer is but that you need to do the analysis. You must have a benchmark so you know if you've reached it. The one takeaway I've made on the financials is that if you don't see how the team will be better off as a whole by adding a person or making the decision to grow, don't do it."

"I'm not talking about personality conflicts. I'm talking about hiring someone who's going to overlap what you're doing. When you do that, you're really just going to slice the pie into three instead of two pieces or four instead of three, or whatever."

— Jason Robbins,
Broker and
Team Manager



Don't provide more than you can afford.

Breaking your own bank to make your team members happy is another deadly sin for team profit. “Too many team leaders have a bad split structure,” asserts Drew Coleman, ABR, AHWD, CRB, C-RETS, CRS, e-PRO, GRI, PSA, RENE, SRES, SRS, founder of Opt Real Estate in Portland, Ore., which operates in Washington and Oregon. “I’m big on giving people things—our whole brokerage is based on giving more—but a lot of times, people come in on a split that’s too high for the team leader’s costs.”

“There are a number of ways team leaders can have high costs,” he adds. “It can be through things like relocation referrals or sunk allocated costs into lead providers. Then they undervalue those in their compensation model and quickly end up underwater. There’s no point in giving the bartender on the Titanic a raise.”

Along the same lines, Coleman says super-tight profit margins prevent team leaders from easily pivoting in response to outside forces. “They’re not prepared for cycles and other factors,” he says. “For example, inflation changes a lot of things today. Last year was an exceptional market, where we saw the highest number of homes sold in many, many years. Budgeting based on an exceptional year versus the mean year is dangerous.”



DREW COLEMAN
ABR, AHWD, CRB, C-RETS,
CRS, e-PRO, GRI, PSA,
RENE, SRES, SRS

FOUNDER

Opt Real Estate

Portland, Ore



Be more purposeful about providing and training on leads.

“Lead generation is a big area where team leaders lose money,” states Booker. “Once we get someone on as a team member, we team leaders think we have to provide leads—that’s what we all think. I feel like it should be the opposite. This new person should be contributing to the team with their own leads, and we should be teaching them how to generate their own leads, as well.”

“As a team leader, I’m a mentor,” she explains. “I have this experience, and that’s why people join my team. But they should also be bringing their own sphere of influence into the team for the benefit of the team. Too often, new team members have this sphere, and they don’t understand what to do with it. It’s our job to help them figure out how to bring it out.”

To be clear, Booker isn't saying you shouldn't provide leads to your team members. She's saying that too many team leaders don't dig deep into showing their new team members how to nurture leads. "We might give them a lead and not really go through every step with them," she explains. "Then we're losing that sale, and the new team member still doesn't know what they're doing. Just watching a team leader do things doesn't work for everybody. Some people need that hands-on experience and training."

Another note on leads: Coleman advises caution when considering purchasing lead-gen tools. "Too many team leaders will take a leap on an unknown lead source," he says. "They spend on an unproven or untested lead source, and it's like buying a lottery ticket. The best thing is to ask someone who's used that system about their results. And the best way to do that is to call someone in another part of the country so you're not asking this information of your competitors."

"If a company tells you they don't share who uses their system, I'd be wary of that company," he says. "Or if they pressure you that their offer is good for today only, I'd also be very wary."



Require your team members to have skin in the game.

"Always be careful about making spending decisions rather than saying, 'I'll pay for that, and it'll pay for itself,'" advises Robbins. "Your team members need to participate in your expenses."

"Of course, it depends on splits and other financial arrangements, but you shouldn't be paying for everything out of the team's share of a transaction," he says. "It's particularly risky to purchase new technology, launch an advertising initiative, or do things that might be above and beyond the core you provide and to take on all the costs. Maybe it's as low as \$10 or \$20 a month, but those things can add up and eat into the team's financial profitability."

If you're bringing on a new tool or service, Robbins recommends cost sharing. "Maybe you tell team members you're giving them this at half off, with the expectation that they'll help pay for it," he states. "That should be spelled out in the team agreement. For new things, extraordinary things, and special opportunities, there needs to be a system in place for evaluating if those make financial sense for the team and, if so, in what way."

Perhaps you can allow team members to decide whether to implement a new tool or system you're providing because it may not make sense for every team member to jump in. "Maybe team members can opt in on a case-by-case basis," says Robbins. "The punchline is that you shouldn't overcome resistance to adopting new tools or services by paying fully for them yourself."

Wait. If you allow your team members to make the decision of whether to adopt a tool or service, how do you know whether they're doing an actual analysis or just being tight-fisted in a way that stifles profit? "If something is for everybody's business—it's a flat-out cost of business—you have to balance fairness with practicality," says Robbins. "You have to get everybody around the table and say, 'This is going to be a significant cost increase.' You're not saying, 'If you're going to participate' but, 'Let's talk about how we can adjust.' Once you start paying for something, it's really hard to shift that expense back to someone else."

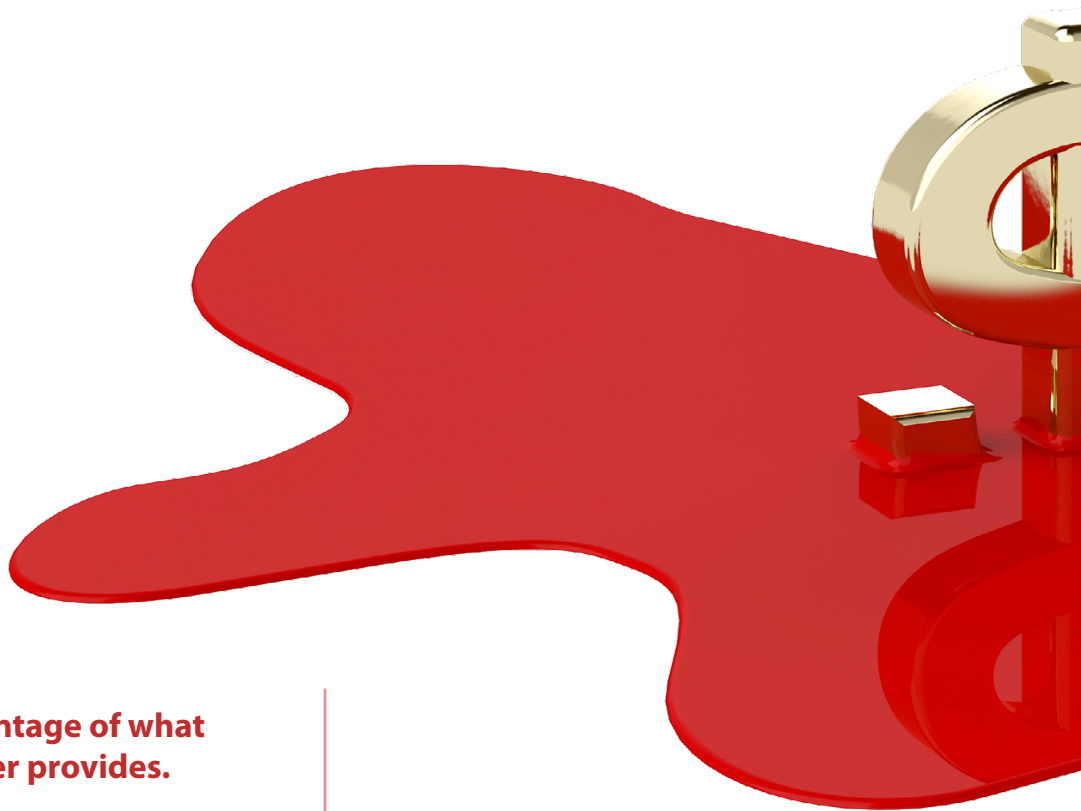


Take advantage of what your broker provides.

Why reinvent the wheel? “We’re in an industry where we feel like we’re on our own because we’re independent contractors, and a lot of times we think we know better than others,” says Booker. “But your brokerage may have done the research on a tool or service and said, ‘Hey, we’ve studied this, and we think this should be a benefit to you.’”

“Sometimes, we don’t embrace that,” she adds. “I think sometimes we team leaders feel like we’re our own little brokerage. But we shouldn’t because that’s not who we are.”

One more point, Booker also believes too many team leaders are chasing tools and systems that end up making their and their team members’ jobs more complicated. “It’s the shiny-object syndrome,” she explains. “We’ll get offered this huge CRM that works for teams, and we’ll spend money on it. But then you waste time you could be spending on sales and getting deals closed trying to implement these programs. You’ll use this program, then you’ll go to that program, and then you’ll go onto another program. Keep it simple and use only what’s necessary.”





It probably goes without saying, but we'll say it: Track your expenses.

This one seems obvious, but practically all of us are guilty of not paying attention to every dollar we spend and then being surprised at how little we've saved. The fix is to review your outgo regularly.

"Everybody should go through their credit card statements every month," says Robbins. "With all those little things that cost \$2 to \$3, all of a sudden you have a couple hundred dollars going out each month. The same thing is true with a team.

"In the region of the country where I work, 6-8 people is a large team, 20 is considered huge, and many are 2-3 people," he explains. "So it's not like we have a whole budget department and we're sending expenses up the chain. You have to make sure the assumption you made six months ago about an expense still stands."

Coleman agrees and suggests hiring an expert to handle your numbers. "A lot of this comes down to team leaders needing to know their numbers—and they need to know their numbers cold," he notes. "I recommend team leaders hire a bookkeeper no matter what size team you have so you have rough numbers of your budget. There are companies that will do a few hours each month. Find someone who has the skill you need and have your finances done by them."

Have you noticed that all this advice has a common thread? It's to be thoughtful and purposeful in building and running your team. "You have to have a strategy," says Robbins. "You don't have to be right, and it doesn't have to be perfect. But if you don't have a strategy, you're going to flail about." 🍌

G.M. Filisko is a lawyer and freelance writer who specializes in real estate, legal, business, and personal finance topics.

8 Steps To Reach Your Diversity Goals

How to get beyond buzzwords and make big progress on the DEI front.

You've been working to make your team more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. The problem is that making big strides on the DEI front is a long-term process, and it's hard to see as you're working toward your goals if you're making much headway.

We can help. We reached out to brokers and DEI experts to identify the specific steps you can take to help you reach your DEI goals, and they shared these eight ideas.

1. Start with a serious look at your operations.

"Conduct a diversity assessment and survey internally," suggests Dan Belcher, a real estate broker and founder and CEO at Mortgage Relief in Oklahoma City, Okla. "It can address diversity issues and remove biases in the hiring process. With the information you gather, you can set deadlines and goals to improve the hiring process."

How do you do that assessment? "The best way to measure diversity in your team is to identify your applicants versus the actual ones you're hiring," he notes. "Take note of biases in your

recruitment process if you have widely diverse applicants yet your actual team lacks diversity."

"Another way to assess your practices is to observe your leadership diversity," says Belcher. "Advocacy should reflect on all levels. It's possible to be inclusive of one demographic while ignoring the others, so it's crucial to expand your diversity in all areas."

2. Know that your actions may tell a different story than your words.

As Belcher suggested, you need to look at your leadership with an eye toward evaluating whether you practice what you preach. Kenneth L. Johnson, president and diversity recruiter at East Coast Executives in Harlem, N.Y., makes a similar point, and they both come down to authenticity.

"We have a few DEI-committed real estate and property management clients that have secured our services to address workplace diversity," he says. "If a company has a singular focus on addressing this issue only in front-facing positions on their sales team, they're setting themselves up for potential failure."



Put more directly: If you're trying to recruit diverse agents yet your entire leadership team is nondiverse, you're sending a message.

Johnson says candidates will recognize when you're making an effort for show rather than making a true commitment to DEI. "If candidates see diversity across your organization, they may be more inclined to believe your commitment to DEI is real," he says. "The key to a successful DEI strategy is to address the issue across all areas within the organization."

3. Recruit in places you may not have thought of before.

"Nontraditional recruiting platforms include [Jopwell.com](https://jopwell.com), which is a site for Black and Hispanic job hunters to browse and apply for jobs," explains Miriam Groom of Mindful

Career in Montreal. "The interface is very user-friendly and simple, making it an easy place to source and post jobs. Jopwell's user base is growing rapidly, meaning there are more promising candidates each day."

"Also consider include.io, a recruiting and retention platform that uses mentoring sessions to validate diverse and nontraditional technical talent," she adds. "They also make it easy for employers to search for candidates through opt-in diversity data and referrals. It was started by Leanne Pittsford, CEO of Lesbians Who Tech, which is a great community of more than 25,000 queer women and allies."

4. Put career sites to better use

"Tap into the 'People Also Viewed' section on LinkedIn," suggests Groom. "As you source,

Recruiting

you'll likely come across a diverse pool of candidates organically, whether that's people with different levels of education, socioeconomic status, gender, or ethnicity."

"When you uncover these candidates, again check out the 'People Also Viewed' section," she adds. "A candidate's network generally comprises people who share similar backgrounds, so taking a look at their connections, as well as who LinkedIn suggests you look at next, is a simple way to find candidates who will bring diversity of thought to your organization."

"Also look at the networks of candidates from underrepresented communities on [GitHub](#)," she suggests. "This strategy is similar to looking through the 'People Also Viewed' section on LinkedIn. Find one GitHub user from an underrepresented group and take a look at their repositories to find other contributors who may also be from an underrepresented group."

"Also, scroll through that GitHub user's followers to find others from different backgrounds," recommends Groom. "One caveat: gender diversity on GitHub can be problematic. Only about 6 percent of users with more than 10 contributions are female, so if you're looking to improve the gender balance on your team, this may not always be the best place."

5. Implement simple steps in your recruitment process.

"One effective strategy we use is blind resume reviews, which means we hide information that gives clues on race or gender," reports Marina

Vaamonde, founder of PropertyCashin.com in Houston. "That helps us focus on skills and other qualifications that matter the most to us."

"Do this by asking your human resources team or whoever gathers resumes to manually cover the basic information that can influence bias," she adds. "Another effective strategy is to ask prospective applicants to fill out a [Google Form](#) or a form on your website that will gather information about their skills and experience, leaving out clues on race, gender, age, and so on. You can use specific questions based on the qualities you're looking for."

"This blind resume review is just the beginning, of course," adds Vaamonde. "But it will help you screen applicants without bias and give them a chance to reach the interview phase, where they can really showcase what they've got."

6. Look beyond inexperience.

"Be willing to train potential candidates who may lack the education of other candidates," advises Isaiah Henry, CEO of Seabreeze Management based in Aliso Viejo, Calif.

"Some of our top performers didn't have a ton of experience when they came to work for us. But they did show us they had what it takes to succeed. They emphasized in their interviews that they were hard workers, quick learners, and had a passion for people."

"At our company, we're all about passion," he adds. "If we believe someone has the passion to make an impact on the community they serve, it doesn't matter how much experience they had

before they came to us. We're willing to be their springboard to success. So don't rule people out based on their lack of experience. Most people just need one chance to prove themselves. Let diverse communities know your company is willing to give them that shot."

7. Commit to hearing difficult feedback.

Belcher says you must create a safe space for every team member, and that means encouraging all your agents and staffers to speak up and contribute to the conversation at every step of your company's journey.

That starts with ensuring your leadership is diverse, he says, but it also includes never ignoring issues your team members raise related to a lack of diversity and inclusion in your team. "By ignoring these concerns, you're encouraging biases and discrimination to fester," he says. "Address these concerns immediately."

8. Put your money to work.

Build a pipeline yourself, as several real estate professionals are doing. Courtney Poulos, broker/owner at Acme Real Estate in Los Angeles, launched a scholarship program for high school graduates from South Los Angeles. "It pays for education, exam fees, professional membership, and 11 weeks of intensive training," she explains. "We believe communities need to be represented, and that all starts with real estate."

John Crossman, CCIM, of Crossman Career Builders of Winter Park, Fla., has shifted from real estate to making diversity his full-time

job. He has created scholarship programs at historically Black colleges and universities and at other post-graduate institutions with strong diverse populations.

"I've been working in the DEI space for years," he says. "We endowed the first-ever real estate scholarships at Florida A&M University, Bethune-Cookman University, and Jackson State University. The result has been more students and alums from these universities seeking careers in real estate."

The list of Crossman's scholarships is longer than even those, and the scholarships have led to other campus activities that further build a diverse pipeline. "After we created the Crossman Career Builders at Bethune-Cookman University, a private HBCU, they created a real estate club and are seeking to grow their real estate education," says Crossman. "They now have guest lectures and internships. The Bergstrom Crossman scholarship at The University of Florida is a full ride to a student who went to an HBCU for undergraduate school. The Crossman Career Builders Scholarship at Florida State University is the first-ever real estate scholarship for women, Blacks, Hispanics, or members of the Seminole Tribe."

Crossman sold his commercial real estate company in 2019 and launched his current company about 18 months back. "We're small, with five employees, and three are diverse," he says. "But it isn't about us. My goal is to impact the entire real estate industry on being more diverse, and I believe we're influencing others."

Why Agents Are Jumping on TikTok

Here are four tips for this video-only social media site from real estate pros who say it's paying off for them.

In a skinny minute, Dawn Riley has on TikTok far surpassed the reach she has on Instagram.

"I'm very happy with my social media, especially TikTok, and the numerous amounts of referrals I receive," says the associate broker at RE/Max One in Maryland who holds the e-PRO®, Green, GRI, PSA, RENE, and SRS designations. "On my Instagram [@I.Love.Homes](#), it took me 10 years to get 45,000 followers. It took me 15 years to get 8,000 followers on my Facebook business page, [@RealtorInMaryland](#).

"I became active on TikTok, [@drunkrealestate](#), at the end of 2020 and already have 60,000 followers," she adds.

Riley says she has an IT background, but she's also been boning up on her skills by taking a number of university courses. "All those courses have been on social media and digital marketing," she explains. "Do I feel video is the future? Yes. Do I think TikTok will dethrone Instagram and Facebook? Yes."

Riley isn't the only real estate pro who's happy she took a shot at TikTok for her business. Read on to hear other agents explain their results on this trendy platform and offer their tips to help you build your brand on the platform.

Be George Jetson, not Fred Flintstone

Devi Cooper, an agent at RE/Max Associates in Layton, Utah, says she's been using TikTok, [@devilynncoper](#), to generate business for the past year. "It's been a wonderful addition to my marketing strategy," she says. "It really allows me to reach people from not only my own state but nationwide."

Jason Ault, an agent at Element Home Buyers in Lincoln, Neb., started using TikTok during the pandemic. "It has more than 1 billion active users, which gives me the perfect opportunity to engage with my target audience," he states. "It has helped me gain insights into the latest marketing trends and consumer behaviors. The best part is that I can connect with micro or macro influencers to create engaging content to further increase my reach."

For Michael Shapot, a lawyer and associate broker at Keller Williams NYC in New York, it was seeing colleagues successfully use the platform that convinced him to dip his toes into the TikTok waters. "My interest is exposure for my listings as well as relevancy for myself," he says. "As an industry veteran of more than 20 years, I constantly look for opportunities to remain ahead of the technology curve. I prefer to be compared with George Jetson rather than Fred Flintstone."

“We’ve been able to leverage the impactful, user-friendly app to safely and creatively market our listings and ourselves,” he adds. “As a buyer or renter, where else can you view 30 apartments in 30 minutes? And as a listing agent, seller, or landlord, where else can you quickly get this type of exposure?”

Shapot is getting fun and supportive reactions from viewers of his videos: “Cool!” “Cutting edge.” “Who knew?” “How did you do that?” “Looks like fun.” “Creative.”

He considers all the responses an opportunity to continue the dialogue with users. Shapot reports getting one new listing opportunity, though it hasn’t turned into a listing—yet.

“The short, quick videos on TikTok are fun for everybody to watch, whether you’re currently a serious real estate consumer or not,” says Shapot. “And they offer an opportunity for their creators to find a wider audience. The videos are also fun to make.”

How to TikTok better

Here are four tips from these TikTok marketers:

1. Be ready for a different type of engagement.

“Since jumping into TikTok, I’ve realized that it’s a pretty different audience,” says Rogers Healy, [@therogershealy](#), CEO of The Rogers Healy Companies in Dallas. “I’ve noticed the exposure is much more vast due to the fact that it’s getting more use currently than Instagram and Facebook. The audience also is less intentional when browsing, as well as more easily engaged



due to operating on a platform with a shorter attention span.”

Don’t assume it’s all kids on TikTok. “People tend to think that TikTok is only for a younger audience,” says Cooper. “To some degree, that may be true. The younger audience is more likely to be the creators, but the older audience is still there watching, and that’s what you need. The audience will turn into your customers.”

2. Do some research on how TikTok is different and useful.

“The TikTok algorithms curate content on a user’s For You page based on the user’s interests to keep them coming back for more,” says Shapot. “So if you’re a new content creator, you no longer require a large following for your videos to go viral and reach a wider audience. Also, unlike on many other platforms, the use of hashtags such as #justlisted make it easier for you to reach people ready to purchase.”

3. Keep an eye on what your followers want.

“TikTok is very different from other social platforms,” says Cooper. “Your audience really expects you to niche down and really provide value. For instance, I can post a TikTok about my personal life, and it won’t perform well. By contrast, I can post the same content as a reel on Instagram and see it go viral.”

“My TikTok audience really wants me to give them information about our state,” says Cooper.

“Anytime I veer outside of that, the performance of the video goes down.”

For Ault, it’s home “work” that draws attention. “I’ve noticed how users love house cleaning videos and tips to improve their home decor for higher bids.”

Kurt Walker, CEO of Mill City Home Buyers in Minneapolis, suggests trying short videos of homes currently on the market. “People love that content, and it’s a great way to market your services and show the audience what kind of houses you deal with,” he says.

“Also, there’s been a recent trend on TikTok—things in my house that just make sense,” adds Walker. “You can change this up a little to something like: Things in this house for sale that just make sense. You can also be creative with your captions and come up with content that’ll keep the audience hooked.”

4. Don’t assume you have to make an epic video.

“My number-one tip is to create short videos,” advises Ault. “This way, you can actively interact with your target audience. Consider providing information on popular housing myths in short clips. For instance, you can simply make ‘yup’ or ‘nope’ videos about myths to increase your consumer engagement. Your followers gain knowledge about common misconceptions regarding real estate in their area and will contact you in the future.”



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Note: On occasion, we'll re-run a column of John's we believe is worth repeating, whether it's because so many new people are consistently entering the business or because experienced agents sometimes benefit from friendly reminders of information they may have let slip from the top of their mind. We think this column achieves both goals.

John's Favorite Sales Meetings: Time for a Tune Up?

Category: Professional Attitude

Materials needed: Handouts included with meeting materials, flip chart

Estimated time: 15-20 minutes or longer depending on the amount of time allowed for group discussion

PowerPoint available: No

Meeting objective: To help agents plan and implement new changes for the coming year based on their previous outcomes and job performance.

INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S MEETING

Begin by explaining to your group that, like automobiles, everyone needs a tune up from time to time. According to www.Dummies.com, your automobile might need a tune up if:

1. It stalls a lot.
2. The engine is running roughly when idling or when you accelerate.
3. It gets harder to start.

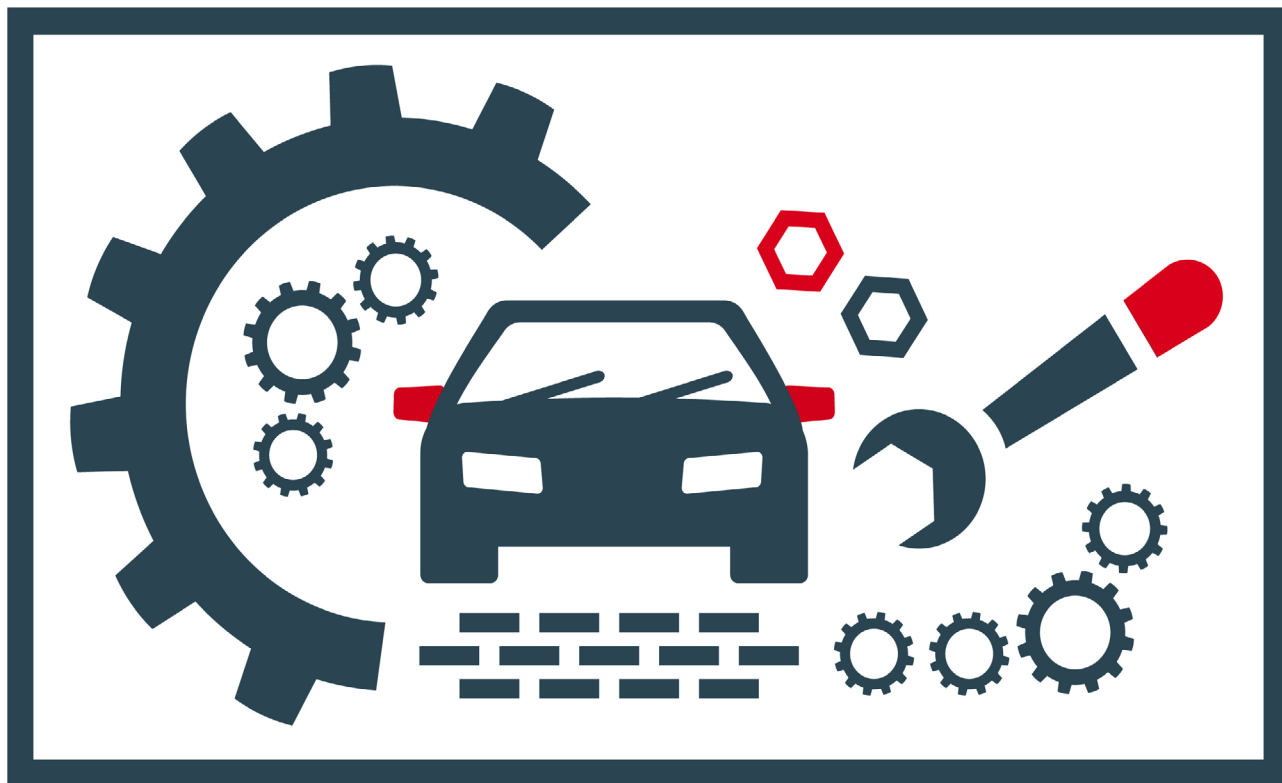
In today's meeting, we're going to see how these three issues can equate to a salesperson and whether you might need a tune up with your sales career.

OPENING:

Distribute Handout 1-A included with this meeting to the group. Ask the group to list three to five bullet points of what worked for them and their sales career over the past 12 months. They should follow the same process for the additional heading, "What Needs a Tune Up?" Have participants list three to five points they feel they need improvement for their sales career to move to the next level. Allow two to three minutes.

STEP 1

Using a flip chart, debrief the first question: What worked for you the past 12 months with your sales career? List the responses on your flip chart, and discuss each point with the group on why their response was advantageous for their career this past year. Allow 5-10 minutes.



STEP 2

Have team members split up into pairs or small groups of no more than three. Have each group discuss among themselves the items that need improvement—the tune up—to move their sales career to the next level. Encourage each group to come up with a list of one or two items that would help improve the problem areas each team member has listed. Allow 5-10 minutes.

STEP 3

Debrief with the team as a whole. Allow each group to have a spokesperson who'll report on some of the issues their group discussed that need improvement, along with their solutions.

Remind the spokesperson to focus on what the group discussed as issues and solutions and not to point to a specific person who needs the particular solution. Be sure to encourage anyone else on your team who might have a suggestion for a needed improvement to offer his or her advice. *Note: You can always add the answers to a flip chart while discussing these bullet points.* Allow 5-10 minutes.

CLOSING

Refer back to the www.Dummies.com website and “How to Tell Whether Your Vehicle Needs a Tune Up.” Explain to your group you're going to equate a tune up for a car to a tune up for sales professionals:

1. If your car stalls a lot or is running roughly

SalesStrategies

when idling or when you accelerate it, it probably needs a tune up. Spark plugs may be fouled or worn, or the electronic sensing device may need adjusting. **Relationship to the salesperson:** If your sales are down or not increasing, you probably need a tune up. Maybe you need some new marketing ideas, a change with your presentation, and an adjustment in how you work your leads each day. Stalling doesn't always indicate a major problem with your sales career. A small adjustment might be all that's needed to keep your career from stalling.

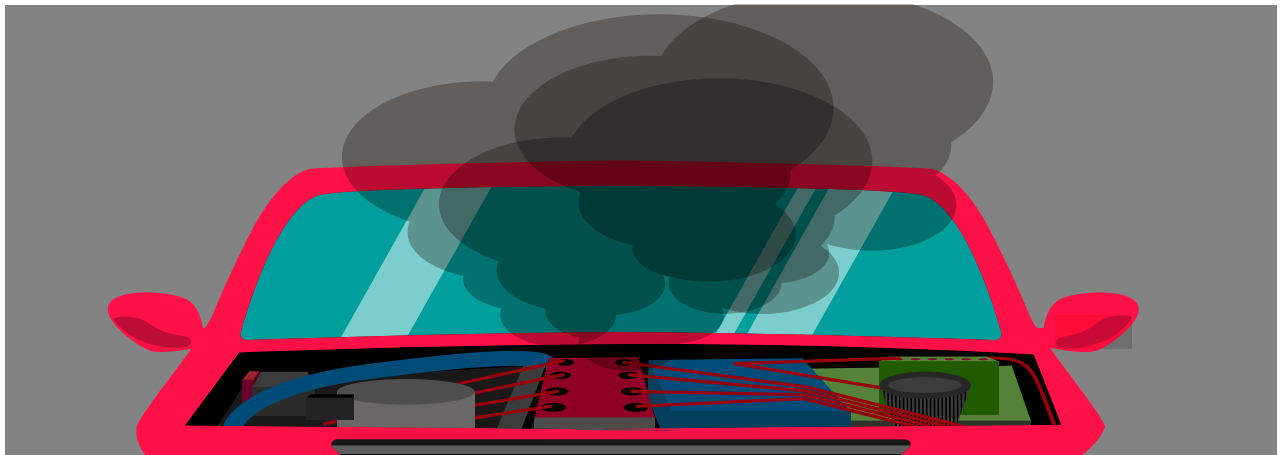
2. The car gets harder to start, your battery may be weak, and the fuel system might need adjusting or replacing. **Relationship to the salesperson:** Listening or reading motivational books might be a great way to start your sales career in a new direction and to reach full performance.

Encourage the group: Look at their papers. What worked, and what needs a tune up? Recap some of the suggestions and solutions offered by the group for overcoming sales performance obstacles. Have them commit to implementing a tune up with their sales career so the following year will be one of their best years ever. Allow 5-10 minutes.

“When you're through changing,
you're through”

—Bruce Barton,
author, ad exec,
and politician

John Mayfield, ABR®, CIPS, CRBsm, C-RETS, e-Pro, GRISM, RENE, SRS, received his real estate license in 1978 and has been a practicing broker since 1981. He earned his Master's degree from REALTOR® University in 2015, has been recognized as REALTOR® of the Year from his local board, and received the 2014 Richard A. Mendenhall Leadership award from Missouri REALTORS®. John has spoken to thousands of real estate professionals in over 22 countries and served as the 2010 President of the CRB Council. He also owns and operates the Global Real Estate School. For more information, visit www.easysalesmeetings.com.



Handout 1-A

What Worked?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

What Needs a Tune Up?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

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