

How to ruin your career in 10 easy steps

Sales trainer, motivational speaker and business guru Traci Smith takes a creative look at how to ensure failure and return to the bottom rung time after time.

10. Expect your broker to do the work for you

It's a rookie mistake that far too many brokers encourage. Your broker wants you to succeed – in fact, if you fail she's out of business, but it's not your broker's job to spoon feed you. In fact, most top producers expect their brokers to do little more than keep the computers running and the electricity bill paid. A top producer understands they need to take care of their own leads and would rather eat rocks than depend on anyone else to make their Mercedes payment. Lose the employee mentality or go back to being an employee.

9. Focus on buyers.

Yeah, I know this is common knowledge but let's do the numbers. How many buyers can you work in one week? Even if you're a master you're probably gonna be stuck listening to them fuss at their kids or argue with each other for the better part of a week, and if you're too nice it can turn into the better part of a presidential administration. Even a novice agent can list a house in

about as long as it takes to have dinner at Chili's. That beats the living daylights out of treating strangers to lunch at the same establishment... day after day after day.

8. Pretend you're running for Prom Queen.

Now, read all the way through on this one. If your clients like you, respect you and want to do business with you all your financial problems are over. Sorry, I can't help you with playoff tickets or marriage therapy. I can tell you a fat wallet should help you with both. You have to be likable but that's a far cry from wanting them to invite you to be the godparent of their first grandchild. No one wants a doctor to be more interested in their feelings than their health. Same goes for a Realtor. You should be consumed with guiding them in the best possible decisions for their hopefully not too humble abode, but they don't pay you enough to listen to their ex-husband stories or try to analyze why their boss just doesn't appreciate them.

7. Give away your money.

When you cut your commission or buy your clients closing gifts better suited for the royal family, you are taking money out of the pocket of the folks you love the most. Next time a client asks you to 'help make the deal come together' or 'split the difference' remember you're

putting your client's checkbook in front of your own. If you're really that benevolent please shoot me an email – I'll give you the routing number to my Merrill Lynch account. Don't fall into the trap of making everyone else wealthy but yourself.

6. Be a gossip.

Funny how folks actually think that talking negatively about someone in the office will win them friends under fluorescent lights. As Realtors this is a deadly game on two fronts – remember that TREC considers making 'disparaging remarks' about another Realtor a very serious offense. Talking about a colleague's soap opera love life or their kid's crack addiction may or may not fall under these guidelines. It guarantees, however, that you'll ruin your stock with the company and all those folks gathered around to hear you spread tales. Quite often people do it almost in a self-righteous way – it's like the full gospel gossip report – find out who you should be praying for...and why! When you spread ugly news you create an ugly image and you advertise your lack of professionalism and discretion.

5. Eat all the free donuts and attend all the lunch buffets.

Yes, the builder events and Realtor wine and cheese 'parties' look like fun on color copy paper but are they

really adding to your bottom line? While the rest of the MLS is touring a new builder's model wouldn't it make more sense to call apartments close by and ask renters to become homeowners? Seriously, wouldn't it be more fun to actually sell the builder's model than to tour it? That way you can afford to brunch with people who love you!

4. Take off from Halloween until January 2nd.

My first year in Real Estate no one told me the market slowed down from All Saints Day to Dick Clark day. As a result, I continued to show up at the office. Quite often, the only other car in the parking lot belonged to the receptionist. As a result of everyone else's laziness I took more listings than Macy's has cashiers during the holiday season – and another score of them the first week in January. My competition was home telling their spouse how slow things were 'this time of year' and I cashed in during that 'slow season.' It was like owning the only liquor store open on New Year's Eve!

3. Listen to music in your car.

Most Realtors spend more time alone in their car than Mario Andretti. With the possible exception of reruns of *Family Feud* there's not a bigger waste of time. Your car can be a rolling university. Think of all the skills and techniques you could learn in the 7,397 hours you spend

in your car each year! You could master a new language, figure out how to *Think and Grow Rich*, or even how to *Love Smart*. There's got to be some area of your life you want to sharpen – why not do that on business time? The typical American work week is 8-5 Monday through Friday. If you worked in 'the system' you'd be accountable to someone else for at least 40 hours a week, right? Let me challenge you to listen to self development or sales training CDs during those hours if you find yourself alone in your chariot. Jim Rohn, one of the most prolific sales trainers of all time, said you'll be exactly the same tomorrow as you are today except for the books you read and CDs you listen to, the seminars you attend, and the people you hang around. The first of this trilogy is easy – in fact, I bet if you put a note in your colleagues' boxes you'd find a few of them have motivational CDs to lend. Tragically, people invest their money in self development but never unwrap the cellophane. It's ironic that so many people give away their money and waste their time. Ultimately that's what usually separates the mega producers from the folks that can't afford to renew their license after the first year.

2. Believe the condition of the market has something to do with your take home pay.

Many fortunes are made when the market is bad. You just have to adjust your strategy. I have a colleague who took

advantage of the awful market in the late 1980's. She met client after client who couldn't afford to sell their home because they owed more than it was worth. She bought several of these homes for no money out of her pocket and still collects rent on scores of these homes. When the market softens many of the part timers and lame agents will go and get real jobs. This also opens the door for listing agents to pounce on the expired market and allows buyers agents to advertise awesome opportunities for first time home buyer's and shrewd investors. As Covey would say, it can be win – win if you keep coming into the office.

And the number one way to ruin your career:

1. Listen to 'they'.

Become cognizant to how often someone says to you 'you know, they say....'. Usually what follows is negative, income destroying information. Who are 'they' anyway? I've made it a habit to respond to anyone who utters a sentence with the words 'they say' to immediately ask "who are they?" This stops them dead in their tracks. When the person recovers what I usually hear is, 'well, you know, people.' No one has ever been able to put a name with 'they.' The only person that can affect your sales, both positively and negatively, is you. The way to sales success or getting a real job lies squarely in the six

inches between your ears. In fact, you can have anything and everything you desire by unleashing the power of your mind and channeling it towards a goal you're passionate about. The thing that separates the blissful from the miserable is the way they unleash their strength and soul toward the life of their dreams. You can have it all – and Real Estate is the perfect way to pad your pocketbook and be master of your own destiny!

Traci Smith owns the 4th highest producing Century 21 office in the nation. She is the author of the critically acclaimed book *Defy the Odds* and does motivational and sales training. Visit her online at www.TraciSmithOnline.com.