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Real Estate Business Institute

Real Estate

Business

For Real Estate Professionals

BETTE McTamney

a Profile
in
FEARLESSNESS



**When It Comes to Safety,
Don't Forget to Keep Your
Clients' Info Safe, too**



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President's Message



Miguel Berger, CRBsm, e-PRO[®], GRIsm

All good things must come to an end, and with my presidency, this is said to be true. For those of you who know me, you know I like to joke, but in all seriousness, it has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve as REBI's 2018 President. This year was unique in that we have found our footing after recovering from past market challenges and growing pains – and the numbers reflect that. Here's a look back at our most notable accomplishments in 2018:

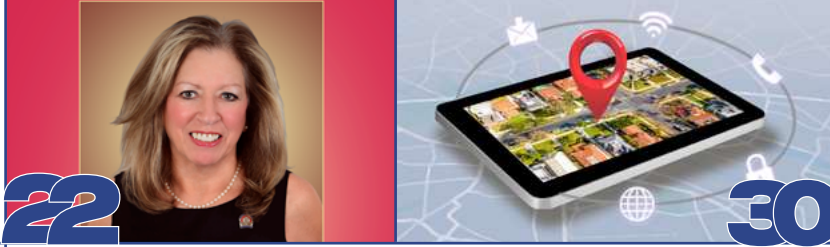
- **Produced a new 3-year strategic plan.** This new strategic plan will be implemented from 2019-2021. This plan will allow REBI to "be more agile and responsive to external realities, more global in our perspective, stronger financially, and more proactive in delivering solutions."
- **Attained record membership numbers.** As of October 31, 2018 our membership has reached 21,745 members, amounting to 28.6% growth from 2017. Additionally, our membership grew over 400% in the past 58 months.
- **Delivered historical number of courses with more students than ever.** We successfully delivered 1,322 courses through October 31, 2018, resulting in 185% growth from 2017. And with more courses, comes more students! Through October 31, 2018, 6,924 students have taken one of our courses, a 50.6% increase from the year prior.
- **Made significant contributions to RPAC.** RPAC's work is vital for a healthy industry and helps us further the mission of REBI. In the past year, over 58% of our members contributed to RPAC, collectively contributing over \$2 million as of October 31, 2018. REBI is also a proud \$5,000 investor and participant in the Corporate Ally Program.
- **Increased our global footprint.** In 2018 we held courses in Canada, Dubai, Romania, and Taiwan. Currently we are preparing for the Spanish translation of our CRB courses, launching in 2019.

These successes did not happen alone, and I appreciate the outpouring of support and dedication from the 2018 REBI Board of Directors, committee members, and staff. I also want to thank REBI's past presidents who laid the groundwork before me. Without the perseverance and dedication of our past and present leaders, we would not be where we are today.

I have genuinely enjoyed my time as "El Presidente" and am humbled as I reflect on what we have achieved in 2018. We have made great progress as an organization, and I am confident that these efforts will continue to flourish under the leadership of your incoming 2019 President, Debora Weidman-Phillips. I joked earlier that "all good things must come to an end," but the reality is the best is yet to come.

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e-PRO, GAA, GREEN, GRI, MRP, PSA,
RENE, RSPS, SFR, SRES, SRS
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ABR, CRB,
GRI, RENE, SFR
Gulfport, MS



SPECIAL EVENT

**HONORING
OUR LEADERS**



Congratulations, Bette!

**Miguel Berger (2018 President);
Bette McTamney
(2018 Hall of Leaders Award Recipient);
Ginny Shipe (CEO)**

**2018 Hall of Leaders Award recipient,
Bette McTamney**



**Ginny Shipe (CEO) thanking
Miguel Berger (2018 President)
for his commitment, vision,
and service to REBI.**

2018 Hall of Leaders Inaugural Reception

Gary Scott (President of Residential Brokerage for Long & Foster) installing Debora Weidman-Phillips as the 2019 President of the Real Estate Business Institute (REBI)



Gary Scott sharing some wonderful stories of Deb's leadership.

Our "just installed" 2019 President!





SPECIAL EVENT

**HONORING
OUR LEADERS**

**2019 President-elect --
James L. Helsel, Jr. and
2019 First Vice President --
Candace Cooke being sworn in.**



A legacy of leadership! Past presidents in attendance to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the CRB Designation.

(Left to right)

**Jeffrey D. Nelson (2000 President); James M. Kinney (2009 President);
Ginny Shipe (CEO); Miguel Berger (2018 President);
Gregory S. Herb (2005 President); Debora Weidman-Phillips (2019 President);
James L. Helsel, Jr. (2019 President-elect); Bette McTamney (2015 President);
Adorna O. Carroll (2016 President); John D. Mayfield (2010 President);
John Yen Wong (2004 President); R. Brian Matza (2011 President)**

2018 Hall of Leaders Inaugural Reception

**Jeffrey D. Nelson (2000 President)
presenting Ginny Shipe (CEO) with
an award for 20 years of service.**



**Miguel Berger (2018 President)
and Maria Cardenas (Director of
Professional Development) clearly
enjoyed pulling off a surprise on
Adorna O. Carroll (2016 President) --
recipient of REBI's first Distinguished
Educator Award.**

**Adorna O. Carroll and Candace Cooke
receive REBI's first
Distinguished Educator Award.**

**During the last 18 months, they have
taught 58 REBI courses to
1,520 students!**





SPECIAL EVENT

**HONORING
OUR LEADERS**



**A special evening for our two
Pennsylvania superstars!**

Bette McTamney
(2018 Hall of Leaders Award recipient) and
Debora Weidman-Phillips
(2019 REBI President)

Jeffrey D. Nelson (2000 President)
Ginny Shipe (CEO)
Debora Weidman-Phillips (2019 President)
and Adorna O. Carroll (2016 President)



**There couldn't be a more perfect
picture that captures the personality
and swag of these two industry giants!**

**REBI's first Distinguished
Educator Award recipients:
Candace Cooke and Adorna O. Carroll**

2018 Hall of Leaders Inaugural Reception

**Enjoy this Photo Montage
from the Event!**





50 Years of the CRB Designation

**Creating forward-thinking brokers, owners,
and managers for half a century**

Here's how the CRB designation has made a difference in the real estate careers of some of our designees.

“

I have obtained numerous designations over my career of almost 40 years. I use only one in my email signatures and business cards, CRB. In my opinion, it represents the pinnacle of achievement as a residential real estate broker and to be honest, the designation that took the most time, effort, and money to obtain, as it should be. In my role as the Director of Strategic Growth for RE/MAX Mid-States and Dixie Region, the CRB is instant credibility with my peers. Our RE/MAX brokers and managers know the importance of the designation and respect the commitment it took to obtain, and retain, the designation.

– Steve Snook CRB, Director of Strategic Growth
RE/MAX Mid-States & Dixie Region
Kansas City, MO

“

I obtained my CRB Designation early on in my career over 30 years ago. It was the best move I ever made to run a successful real estate brokerage. Recruiting, education and finance are the backbone of most successful companies. I consider the CRB designation a wonderful insurance policy if you use the program. I highly recommend young Realtors in management or building a team take advantage of these great courses.

– Michael Bowler CRB
Coldwell Banker Hubbell BriarWood
Lansing, MI

“

The CRB designation has surrounded me with the best of the best; for the times that I needed motivation, inspiration and humor. Just knowing these peers are there if I need them is everything!

– Suzanne Riley, CRB Owner/Broker
CENTURY 21 Boardwalk
Manistee, MI

“

I was fortunate enough to take my first CRB class in 1984 with brokers and managers that were considered to be some of the industry giants. The 1980's was a harsh time for many of us brokers, and my CRB designation opened the door to many management friends and colleagues that I still have to this day.

– Joyce Willson CRB, RENE, SRS
Real Estate Central, LLC
Medina, OH

“

I have enjoyed a long association with our CRB community. Running an office is a challenging dynamic real estate role. One looks for as much content and direction as available. I can count on the “coffee break” opportunities and CRB articles to have meaningful dialogue with my Realtors. Congratulations on 50 years and keep up the good work!

– L. Drake Bratton CRB
Coldwell Banker Willis-Smith Co.
New Bern, NC

“

I sought the CRB Designation to help guide, educate, and build skills for me to be the best Managing Principal Broker I could possibly be for someone else's real estate company. I was working for someone else, building a fantastic large branch from 15 to 95 Brokers for someone else. In 2013, I started my own company and am a very proud CRB Brokerage Owner Manager. Thanks CRB!

– Cheryle Clunes Managing Principal Broker Owner
Summa Real Estate Executives
Clackamas, OR

The CRB Designation Makes a Difference in Careers



In 1990 when I decided I wanted to get in to the management end of the business I went to the owner of the company, whom I greatly respected, and asked his opinion. He was very positive about my abilities to make a good Managing Broker and had one requirement. That requirement was obtaining my CRB designation. I am so glad he made that a condition of the position. It has helped me in being a much better and stronger manager (now owner). Going from an agent to a manager/owner would have been much more difficult in the understanding of what the operation of a Brokerage looks like on a day to day basis. Budgeting, marketing, management, in addition to the day to day problem solving for your agents are skills that came through the CRB curriculum. Happy 50th CRB, and continue the good work.

– *Connie Hinsdale CRB*
Harcourts NW Oregon Realty Group
Silverton, OR



How has CRB made a difference in my career? Well, it made my career, period. The education I took to earn this designation, at the time as a new broker, literally opened my eyes in areas of business, brokerage, finance, and HR as it related to agents that I otherwise wouldn't have even thought of asking about. As a REALTOR member for 20 years now, the CRB designation to me meant and will always mean understanding what it really means to be a broker in this industry. To this day I continue to attend online training, read the magazine and newsletters religiously, and share articles to others constantly. I truly don't believe I would be where I am today in this business if it were not for the education and professionalism I learned by being a part of this group. A very proud and sure to be a life-long member of REBI as a CRB!

– *Daryl L. Braham GRI, CRB, KCC, REALTOR*
Founder/CEO iON Leadership
Internationally Recognized Coaching
Fargo, ND



It is with great humility that I wish to express how important the CRB designation was to me. After now 49 years of practicing and perfecting my craft, I have found that there are 2 elements of life that I use day in and day out: First -- psychology of people, and second -- leadership of people. Both elements I grasped not only as a student in CRB classes, but perhaps more importantly as an instructor. Every time you utilize your psychology skills of human behavior and leadership skills in a classroom experience it serves to reinforce for you the lessons you teach. My CRB designation opened doors to an incredible number of astute Realtors, whether they were aspiring Managers, Broker owners or practicing sales managers, all of us learning from each other and sharing a fellowship that will last a lifetime. Thank you to all my fellow CRB friends and former students for allowing me to share my knowledge and real world experiences. You have all made me a better man and Realtor! Go CRB!

– *Ed Hall Realtor/Broker*
Coldwell Banker Residential
Hinsdale, IL



As young(er) sales agents looking to the future of managing an office we embarked on a mission of education. We already had earned our GRI and CRS designations which allowed us to grow our residential real estate business in ways only designees can imagine. When we decided to look into management the CRB designation was our first choice to learn how to be the best manager. We did not have children at the time so we were able to travel along the east coast to wherever the designation course was being held. Not only did we get a great education, we also enjoyed the travel and meeting other Realtors who would become friends. That was 1985. So now after 37 years for Diane and 40 for Harry in the industry, we still value the great education and the benefits of having earned the CRB Designation.

– *Harry and Diane Disbrow*
Coldwell Banker Riviera Realty
Tuckerton, NJ



Celebrating 50 Years

By Ginny Shipe, CAE, C-RETS, RENE
Chief Executive Officer

At our special event on Friday, November 2, 2018, during the REALTORS® Conference & Expo in Boston, MA, we commemorated the 50th Anniversary of the CRB designation. Fifty years – a half a century – that's a long time for an organization to endure. If you Google notable business launches of 1968, there are only a handful of companies who are still in business today. The majority of businesses founded in that year are no longer with us.

Endurance isn't easy. Just ask any aging baby boomer! Meaningful endurance is even harder. For an organization to endure over 50 years and be as relevant today as it was at its founding is quite a feat. To be more relevant and more valuable today is an honor that goes to few.

When I was putting together the video to commemorate CRB (included next page), I thought I knew the history of CRB pretty well. I have been the CEO of the organization for 20 years and like most of our long time volunteers, I can tick off the highlights. But I know very little about the journey – what it took to create the vision, the persistence necessary to achieve it; the challenges, the accomplishments – big and small.

As I look back on my 20 year tenure with this organization, I have sometimes found myself standing in the right place at the right time to enjoy both the challenge and the benefit of something special that fate washed my way. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the CRB

designation, a fact with which I had nothing to do, and yet here I am – enjoying the challenges and benefits of being the organization's CEO when we celebrate that proud and significant milestone.

I can claim no credit for the rich history of CRB, but I get to be the one who stands at the helm as we coast past this landmark and continue our journey in a sea of possibilities. For much of five decades, CRB has produced some of the premier business management courses in the industry, educating thousands of brokers, owners and managers. It is an envious history and a daunting challenge to live up to the legacy that our founding members left us. It will take all of the imagination, dedication, commitment, and effort we can muster to recruit members who can help us live up to that challenge and to provide them the leadership and encouragement to do so.

If we have learned one thing from the past 50 years, it's that enduring requires remaining relevant. Remaining relevant requires meeting the needs of your members and customers. We hope to continue to endure and continue to add value for the real estate professionals who seek our services and for the members we serve. We look forward to the threads we will add to our tapestry in the next 50 years, and celebrating the continuing journey.

I hope you enjoy the video we put together to share some highlights and our rich history of leadership.



Enjoy this commemorative video!





PAST PRESIDENTS



* Deceased

1967-68	* Rich Port	1992	Neil D. Lyon
1969	* Art S. Leitch	1993	Julie Davis
1970	* Frank J. Burke	1994	* Maxwell Hudson
1971	* Ebby Halliday	1995	J. Randle McKinney
1972	* Clifford Robedeaux	1996	Ronald W. Ruthe, Sr.
1973	* Edward J. Boleman	1997	* Alan Bigelow
1974	George M. Linville	1998	Drexanne Evers
1975	* Richard M. Caruso	1999	Edward D. Hall
1976	Joseph P. Klock	2000	Jeffrey D. Nelson
1977	Joe Hanauer	2001	Bradley C. Hanks
1978	Albert J. Mayer, III	2002	Larry D. Romito
1979	* Joseph B. Carnahan	2003	Laura W. Duggan
1980	* Lou Von Dyl	2004	John Yen Wong
1981	Gilbert Schwartz	2005	Gregory S. Herb
1982	* Henry A. Leist	2006	William C. Furst
1983	* Kenneth J. Reyhons	2007	Bonnie Sparks-Gray
1984	* Ronald P. Noyes	2008	Jonathan D. Nicholas
1985	* Harold L. Kahn	2009	James M. Kinney
1986	David B. Doeleman	2010	John D. Mayfield
1987	Nancy E. Lang	2011	Brian Matza
1988	Earl M. Jackson	2012	Adrienne "Abe" Wagner
1989	Thomas Martin	2013	Darren Kittleson
1990	John W. Lane	2014	Jean Crosby
1991	Robert A. Vedral	2015	Bette McTamney



2016	Adorna O. Carroll – Inaugural President of REBI
2017	Michael Bindman
2018	Miguel Berger

CRB CHARTER DESIGNEES

A special Awards Committee convened in New York City in November of 1968 and approved the first CRB designation applications. The following 117 individuals are considered the CRB Charter Designees.



Sally M. Alta Birmingham, MI	F. Ross Ellis Lakewood, OH	Joseph P. Klock Philadelphia, PA	Michael J. O'Dea Louisville, KY	Daniel F. Sheehan, Jr. St. Louis, MO	Richard C. Van Valer San Jose, CA
Lewis Bass Louisville, KY	Jacob H. Feichter, Sr. Fort Wayne, IN	Louis S. Laronge Cleveland, OH	Miss Jamie O'Neill Oklahoma City, OK	Daniel F. Sheehan, Sr. St. Louis, MO	Albert V. Vincent Honolulu, HI
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Howard M. Benedict Hamden, CT	Arnold Goldsborough Wilmington, DE	Victor L. Lyon Tacoma, WA	Theodore J. Pappas Miami, FL	Harold C. Simon St. Louis, MO	F. Poche Waguespack, Jr. New Orleans, LA
Arthur E. Biard San Antonio, TX	Ira Gribin Encino, CA	Beatrice A. Marshall Radnor, PA	Wallace A. Peacock Dayton, OH	P.C. Smaby Minneapolis, MN	Gordon L. Walsh Ridgefield, CT
Edward J. Boleman Indianapolis, IN	Owen E. Hall Birmingham, MI	Maurice C. Martindale Indianapolis, IN	H.P. Persons, Jr. Macon, GA	Russell Dymock Smith Palos Verdes Estates, CA	Gail M. Wanless Springfield, IL
Bruce J. Branch St. Louis, MO	Philip A. Hall Birmingham, MI	Alton T. Maxim Portland, ME	Rich Port La Grange, IL	Charles E. Spring Minneapolis, MN	Nestor R. Weigand, Jr. Wichita, KS
Sam Ed Brown Albuquerque, NM	Ebby Halliday Dallas, TX	Albert J. Mayer III Cincinnati, OH	Stanley J. Pounder Portland, OR	E. Winfield Stewart Aldan, PA	James I. (Jim) West Houston, TX
Alde C. Bugher Neward, DE	William K. "Bill" Hamburg Pittsburgh, PA	George E. Mayer III Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Ralph W. Pritchard La Grange, IL	George L. Striebing Denver, CO	Leonard Westdale, Sr. Grand Rapids, MI
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Richard Caruso Hinsdale, IL	Harold J. Hurt Denver, CO	Winfred O. Mitchell Memphis, TN	David N. Robinson Berkeley, CA	Joseph A. Thorsen La Grange, IL	Daniel R. Williamson Farmington, MI
Willis J. Coates Denver, CO	A.H. Jennings, Jr. Atlanta, GA	LeRoy Montgomery Memphis, TN	John A. Rogge Brigantine, NJ	Jack W. Todd Cherry Hill, NJ	Alvin J. Wolff Spokane, WA
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Preview the New REBI Brochure

CRB & SRS designees — be sure to check out
the new member benefits
and resources and make the most
of your membership!



CRB
CERTIFIED REAL ESTATE
BROKERAGE MANAGER

SRS
MULTI-REPRESENTATIVE SPECIALIST

CRETS
Certified Real Estate
TEAM SPECIALIST

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NEGOTIATION EXPERT

A Profile in earlessness

Undaunted by not knowing her own family tree, this Hall of Leaders inductee planted her own family tree, along with a professional forest.

By G. M. Filisko



BETTE McTAMNEY

2018 Hall of Leaders Recipient

Bette McTamney

A Profile in Fearlessness

With many people, there's a single experience from their life that reveals who they are at their core. For BetteMcTamney, who grew up in Newfoundland, Canada, that event took place when she was 13.

McTamney was adopted before she was born and grew up as an only child. After a decade-long bout with cancer, her adoptive mother, Connie Chernin, passed away. Her adoptive father, Joe Chernin—apparently not sure how to interact with a grieving teen—shipped her off to boarding school.

That just wouldn't do, decided the young woman. "One day in school, I thought, 'Why am I doing this? Why can't I be with the family I have left?'" she recalls. "I said to my dad, 'You'd better decide what you're going to do with me. I'll be in college pretty soon, and you won't even know who I am.'"

McTamney's father's first response? "When did you get so smart?" He then asked her where she wanted to live. She threw out Miami, where her family had vacationed on occasion.

Miami it was. At age 48, McTamney's father sold his business and moved the two of them thousands of miles south. "It was kind of crazy, but our years in Miami were awesome," she recalls. "Later, he told me, 'I don't know how you came up with that, but it was the best decision I ever made. I probably never would have gotten to know you if I hadn't done it.'"

“The best story of my life”

That ability to boldly make life-altering decisions has served McTamney well ever since. “I don’t think there’s much that scares me enough that I don’t want to try it,” she states.

When she met Mike McTamney in the first week of college in Nova Scotia—at registration no less—she dumped the guy she’d been dating to begin seeing Mike. For summer break after that freshman year of college, she packed up and headed with Mike to the McTamney home in suburban Philadelphia.

“I went to live with his family, sharing the main bedroom with his four sisters, in a two-bedroom row house,” she states. “His parents were in the little bedroom, and he was in a bedroom in the basement. Mike’s aunt had eight girls, too. It was a big Irish family, and I lived there the whole summer. Imagine it—I suddenly got a big family.”

That would be important to anybody, but it was especially fulfilling for someone who, to this day, doesn’t know her personal back story. Still, McTamney considers the history she does know to be “the best story of my life.”

DNA testing has turned up no blood relatives anywhere. “I have no clue whatsoever where I came from or what my story is,” says McTamney. “I can tell you that my adoptive mother worked for a doctor, where a young girl came in pregnant. My adoptive parents couldn’t have children, and my mother apparently took care of this young girl the whole time she was pregnant. My mother was there when I was born. I’m sure a lot of my relatives know where I came from, but nobody is giving up that information.”

Under Newfoundland law at the time, adoptions weren’t finalized until a child was two years old. By that time, McTamney’s mother had received her first cancer diagnosis—which should have halted the adoption process. Lucky for McTamney, that didn’t happen.

“The local magistrate knew she had cancer and didn’t tell anybody, signing the papers and saying everything was fine,” she explains.



I swear, your husband called!

The couple were married in 1975, and by the early 1980s, they had two children, Mike Jr. and Jaclyn. That’s when McTamney made another major decision. While she and her husband were purchasing their first house, she carefully watched the agent they were working with. “I thought, ‘If that woman can do that, I can also sell real estate and do very well,’” she says.

Starting as an office assistant, within a year McTamney became an agent amid the high-interest-rate climate at the time (for those who weren’t around, think of how your career would be different with interest rates at 18 percent). “I did some part-time work for the broker—I was taking pictures and helping in the office,” says McTamney. “After about nine months, the broker talked me into getting my license, which I got in 1983.”

When her kids went to school full time, McTamney went into real estate full time. She sold her first home within six months—quite an accomplishment after being so excited to get a good lead that she forgot to get the buyer’s phone number.

“I can remember it specifically,” she explains. “It was a crazy floor call, and the guy said he was standing at a phone booth across the street from a new-construction site. He gave me his home address and told me he needed to call his wife so he could arrange for me to come see his house to put it on the market. I thought, ‘Not only are they going to buy a home, but I’m also going to get to sell their current home!’”

"I had no clue how to do that," McTamney adds. "I grabbed my office manager, and we went to the man's home since we had his address and I'd forgotten to get his phone number. I knocked on the door and explained why I was there, and the woman said, 'I don't know anything about this.' I said, 'Here's my business card. I swear, when your husband gets home tonight, he'll tell you he called me.'"

The listing McTamney got through that call sat right next to a power plant. But there was no stopping her at that point. She sold that home and has sold hundreds since. "That was it—then I was on a roll," she says. "I thought, 'All right, I can do this.' Once you get that first one under your belt, you feel like the moon is in your hand, and you're ready to go."

Within a decade, McTamney and another real estate professional, Eileen Campbell, had opened their own brokerage; a third partner, Angelo Guerra, joined them shortly after the launch. They started out as an independent brokerage with an office onsite at a local builder's office, primarily selling the builder's inventory. "One of our builders liked us, and he said, 'I'll put you up in my office; you can hang your real estate shingle outside, and you can sell my new construction,'" she says. "We said, 'We're in.' It started with two of us and wound up with six of us."

The company eventually grew to two offices and in 1995 became an ERA McTamney, Campbell & Guerra, which the partners operated for nearly 20 years. In 2013, as their franchise agreement was up for renewal, Guerra suddenly passed away; Campbell and McTamney weren't ready to sign another 10-year franchise agreement. Eventually, they decided to sell their building and close their office. McTamney then stepped into the position she currently holds: associate broker and director of recruiting and coaching at RE/MAX 440 in Skippack, Pa.

It's admittedly a little odd not to be in charge of the company. "But it's also very nice," says McTamney. "I don't have to worry about the problems every day of the books and the numbers and whether agents are doing the right thing. That's always stressful."

Through it all, giving back

While McTamney was building a career, she was also building a strong professional foundation, and that included earning her CRBsm, SRES[®], CRS, GRI, and SRS designations.

She's been active at the state and local REALTOR[®] association levels for decades. McTamney began taking on leadership roles in 2002, when she served as the president of the Montgomery County Association of REALTORS[®]. In 2013, she became president of the Pennsylvania Association of REALTORS[®], and the next year, she was named its REALTOR[®] of the year. McTamney was also the National Association of REALTORS[®] regional vice president in 2016.

The entire time, McTamney was also deeply involved in the Council of Real Estate Brokerage Managers, starting when she began taking CRB courses in 1989. "When I went to get my broker's license, I decided I also needed to get the CRB courses under my belt," she states. "In fact, all three of the partners at our company got our CRB designations at the same time. We were determined to make our office successful, and it was the only way we could learn how to run an office.

"Back in those days, you had to fly all over the country to where the classes were held," recalls McTamney. "The classes were geared toward helping brokers work with other brokers across the country, where you'd get together and share ideas. We'd open our company books to the other brokers and help each other.

"We'd also discuss recruiting, and what brokers were doing that worked for them," she adds. "The referrals were also amazing. One referral would pay for that whole trip to the class; I still make referrals today through REALTORS[®] who are CRBs.

"Some of the brokers I know don't have designations—some don't believe in that," she says. "I personally believe the resources I get from and the value of maintaining my


designations and being professional is so important. In fact, at my current company, there are six brokers who run 10 offices, and all but one has some designation, such as the CRB—and I'm working on him."

McTamney was as the CRB Council president in 2015 as it was transitioning into the Real Estate Business Institute. The move involved planning and coordination by McTamney and other leaders at the CRB Council with NAR leadership regarding the organization's name and certification courses.

"It's not always easy to work out details with organizations unless you as a leader have the ability to see it through, to be fair and honest, and yet to not be annoying, where you say you disagree, and you're putting your foot down and that's it!" notes McTamney. "Some people will pick up their ball and go home. That wasn't how I felt about this. We all believed this was going to increase the value of the organization, and it did. The CRB Council had about 5,000 members before the change, and REBI now has over 21,000 members."

To honor McTamney's dedication to promoting the CRB designation and strengthening REBI, this month at the REALTORS® Conference & Expo in Boston, she was inducted into the REBI Hall of Leaders. "With something like this, you always believe you're not worthy and that there are so many other dedicated people more worthy of this honor," McTamney states. "When you get the phone call, you think, 'Why did you pick me? I'm just doing what everybody else does as well.'"

"But the value of being put up like this by your peers is amazing," she adds. "I'm so excited that they even considered me to be part of that group. I'll always give back to this organization because it's done so much for me."

Professionalism will continue to be a critical focus for McTamney. But these days, there's another focus in her life—her three grandchildren: Jillian, 11, Jonathan, 9, and Jacob, 7. "They're the most exciting thing that has ever happened to me," says McTamney. "Having my own flesh and blood—all part of my children, my hubby, and me, so they're my family. Really, what could an adopted child love more than her own family? Who needs anything else?" 

YOU WANT SOMETHING DONE, AND DONE RIGHT? CALL MCTAMNEY

For years, industry leaders have turned to Bette McTamney when they wanted to accomplish a massive and difficult project. It's her ability to get things done—and done well—that has made McTamney one of the premier get-it-done people in the business. Industry leaders, however, are also quick to note that she's a true mentor and friend (with killer shoes, they add!).

A standout at bringing people together

"From the first time I met Bette, she truly exemplified what a REALTOR® leader should be all about: knowledgeable, skilled, insightful, strong, determined, passionate, sensitive.

When I served as NAR's president in 2014, I worked with Bette through a most challenging 'association' negotiation—during which she embodied all the above characteristics and helped lead us to success.

But what stands out for me is what I've always known about Bette: At the end of the day, her goals weren't personal but were to bring people together in a constructive way that, in the long run, would benefit all.

She's one of the kindest people I know—and from my perspective, that's what makes her an uncommon, but deeply appreciated, leader. I count it as a privilege to be among her many friends."

— Steve Brown, broker, Irongate Inc., REALTORS®, Dayton, Ohio

Think of the Energizer bunny

“Bette and I have been in leadership together on a state level; our NAR region is Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey, and it’s very close in terms of leadership. I’m the past president of the New Jersey REALTORS®, and she’s a past president of the Pennsylvania Association of REALTORS®. So we’ve known each other for years, and we’ve become really close friends.

She’s truly the Energizer bunny. She’s so full of passion and enthusiasm for whatever she does and is involved in. That’s what makes her such a great leader. She’s a total team player and makes sure everybody is involved. That doesn’t just apply to her REALTOR® worlds; she’s the same way with her children and grandchildren. She’s just a human dynamo.

We tease Bette about the 14 suitcases she brings to every NAR meeting, and two of them are just shoes. Poor Mike, her darling husband, we have no idea how he even loads the car. The airlines love her for the extra baggage fees they must get.

I just love her; Bette is just one of these personality-plus people who make you smile when you see them.”

—Christina P. Clemans, ABR, CRS, GRIsm, PMN, RSPS, broker of record, Chris Clemans Sotheby’s International Realty, Cape May, N.J.

Giving back is a given for the lady with the shoes

“Bette is an inspiration for new leaders. She was one of the first people I met at the state association when I was on the founding Young Professionals Network group. I was her pupil and mentee, and Bette was always there to help me strategize when to push our committees or board to not accept the status quo and even sometimes when to bite my tongue when perhaps the moment wasn’t right.

“From the first time I met Bette, she truly exemplified what a REALTOR® leader should be all about: knowledgeable, skilled, insightful, strong, determined, passionate, sensitive.”

—Steve Brown, broker, Irongate Inc., REALTORS®, Dayton, Ohio

She has also guided me through the years and is always there to give that extra push. Bette has made me ponder where our field has been and where it’s going. She was the driving force for me to become a CRB, and she helped me to become the Pennsylvania CRB chapter president.

Bette wants to see others succeed, and I’ve witnessed first-hand that our peers respect that. She’s brilliant, and she has spectacular ideas that make people think. Whether it’s in a meeting or at a networking event, she’ll give you a challenge or idea and let you run with it. She’s also kind and compassionate, and she can also be ready to throw the proverbial brick at your windshield.

There have been numerous times that I’ve asked Bette for advice on a personal level. Almost everyone has times where they overthink and get too far in the weeds and details of a romantic situation. Bette once said to me, ‘Dude, seriously? You can do so much better. Move on, reach for the stars, and buy the shoes! You have to look good and can never have too many shoes.’ That’s Bette—plain, simple, to the point, and she looks good while doing it!

I wouldn’t be where I am in my career today if it weren’t for Bette. She’s a colleague, mentor, thought leader, confidant, and adopted mother. Most of all, she’s a friend—a friend with fantastic shoes!”

—Jonathan D. Coles, CRBsm, CRS, GRIsm, RENE, SAR, SRS, broker, New Pennsylvania Realty Inc., New Ringgold, Pa.



Telling Bette No? Not Happening

"Bette ran my campaign for the presidency of the National Association of REALTORS® in 2013, and by then, I'd known her for long, long time. She's very determined, diligent, a stickler for perfection and for doing things the right way, and she has her heart in everything she does. If you knew her, you'd say that's obvious just by watching her.

Most campaigns for national leadership aren't run by someone in your state. But Bette had a clear understanding of what needed to be done and how to do it. When I asked her to run my campaign, we were in a room with a bunch of people, and they knew I was going to ask her and that she was going to be on the team either way. When I asked her, there was a delay for about 10 seconds before she answered, and then she agreed. I lost by four votes. This year, however, she ran the campaign for NAR first vice president for Charlie Oppler, and he won.

Bette helped accomplish that through her sheer determination and interest in doing what's right for somebody she likes or cares about. She's a very capable person.

Not responding to Bette is not good. If she needs something done or tells you that you need to do something, she'll make sure you know it needs to be done and that you have to do it. It goes to her being and how she just expects you to do the right thing. I can think of 100 times she's called me and said, 'Did you do this today?' I'd say, 'Not yet,' and her response would be, 'Do it now.'

In fact, she texted me a few weeks ago and asked about some event: 'Are you doing this?' she asked. I told her that I'd be out of town and couldn't make it. Her response: 'Just do it.'"

— *Jim Helsel Jr., CCIM, SIOR, CPM®, CRE™, CRB, FRICS, president/broker of record, Helsel Inc., REALTORS®, Camp Hill, Pa.*

WHEN IT COMES TO

SAFETY

**DON'T FORGET
TO KEEP YOUR**

CLIENTS'

INFO

SAFE, TOO



Cyber attacks are growing exponentially,
which means any private data consumers
have shared with you may be at risk.

Here's how to manage that risk.

By G.M. Filisko

I t used to be that members would file one or two insurance claims for cyberattacks over a 10-year period, reports Finley P. Maxson, senior counsel of Legal Affairs at the National Association of REALTORS® in Chicago, who sees the claims that are filed because he oversees NAR's work with the insurer.

"We've had more incidents this year than in the past, and we're getting very real claims," he states. "We're seeing ransomware attacks, phishing attacks, and hackers forcing their way through WiFi," he says. "In that last case, the real estate company noticed that its data was suddenly being encrypted. Luckily, it was able to stop the attack and contact its insurance provider, which had all the data backed up."

In a ransomware case, Maxson adds, the insurance company paid the ransom, and the real estate company got its data back.

You haven't heard your colleagues speak about these kinds of attacks? Maxson says that's probably because brokers and agents are hesitant to make their experiences public. But cyberattacks are real, and they're growing.

But you can reduce your liability by minimizing the amount of confidential information you receive in the first place and adopting behaviors that will reduce your exposure to these online assaults.

Don't take information you don't need

The easiest way to protect yourself from an unauthorized release of consumers' confidential data is to not receive that data in the first place.

"The last thing we'd ever want is to be put in a position where we somehow betrayed our clients," says Jason Sherman, a lawyer and the chief executive of Real Living At Home, a five-office, 220-agent brokerage based in Chevy Chase, Md. "This issue seemed an easy thing for us to jump in front of: How do we make sure we're keeping our clients' information confidential?"

Sherman consulted with his firm's lawyer about the laws governing this issue, along with his company's server host to determine what it

was doing to protect Sherman's firm's data. He then developed a company policy, and one major pillar of that policy is to avoid receiving consumers' private information at all.

"Real estate brokerages shouldn't be collecting personal information," he insists. "There's no need for it, so don't do it, and don't store it. We don't need consumers' Social Security number. We make sure our contracts don't include personal or financial information. We don't need anything of a real personal nature, so we really just try to not collect it."

What about the issue of what buyers can afford? Don't agents need financial information to do their job? "Sometimes buyers don't know what they can afford—sometimes their estimate is too high or too low," says Sherman. "By having them speak with a loan officer, they can get a better



sense of that, and the lender should be able to get them a preapproval or prequalification letter.”

Fair enough, but what about situations like a cash purchase in which the seller or listing agent is likely going to want to see proof of funds? “Different agents, different sellers, and different brokerages might ask for something different in that situation,” says Sherman. “Many times what buyers will do, which I think is the smartest move, is to ask their contact in the bank to draw up a letter stating that the buyers have enough money to purchase the property. The goal is to communicate that information without handing over that information to people who don’t need it.”

Another workaround to receiving that information yourself: Ask the buyers to blot out information that’s not required, such as their account number. “You want them to redact information that’s not required to show proof of funds,” advises Sherman. “There may be a back and forth to find out the best way to provide that information without putting your client in jeopardy while making sure the listing agent can make the proper judgment.”

Whatever your policies, be sure you know the information you’re getting, advises Lou Nimkoff, owner-broker of Brio Real Estate Services LLC in Winter Park, Fla., and president of the Orlando Regional REALTOR® Association.

“Sometimes agents don’t even realize they have what’s identified as personally identifiable information under state laws,” he says. “They may get attachments to emails that they’re not getting deep into. An attachment might be 10-15 pages long, and maybe agents open it and see the first couple of pages, but not the last few pages—and it’s those final pages that contain financial information, possibly Social Security numbers, and birthdates.



*Lou Nimkoff, owner-broker,
Brio Real Estate Services LLC,
Winter Park, Fla.*

“We have to really be diligent in understanding what we have because once we have it on our computer, we have that liability and responsibility to practice good security controls,” says Nimkoff.

Practicing good security

What does it mean to practice good security controls? Maxson notes that NAR has published a toolkit, <https://www.nar.realtor/data-privacy-security/nars-data-security-and-privacy-toolkit>, to help you stay on the right side of this issue. It includes information on state laws and federal regulations regarding data security and privacy protection, checklists, references and sample policies, and the Federal Trade Commission’s five key principles to a sound program.

You can also get more information with two Window to the Law videos from NAR Legal on the topic: <https://www.nar.realtor/videos/window-to-the-law/window-to-the-law-creating-a-cybersecurity-program> and <https://www.nar.realtor/videos/window-to-the-law/window-to-the-law-best-practices-for-cybercrime-prevention>.

Maxson also says that knowing the information your state law requires you to protect is an



important first step in creating a data security plan. “Every state definitely has something that governs this issue,” he says. “You need to know the definition of personally identifiable information in your state, and if you have that kind of information on consumers, you have a heightened duty to protect it. Also, if you’re getting credit reports, federal laws could also be triggered, such as the Fact Act and the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act.”

If you learn you’re collecting what’s considered PII, be sure to take all necessary steps to protect it, which means restricting access to it to only people at your company who need it to do their job and actively preventing others from being able to access it.

You also need to know your legal requirements if your system is breached. “State laws will also identify what you have to do if there’s a breach,” notes Maxson. “California and Massachusetts have the strictest laws and the broadest definitions of PII. And insurance companies that offer this coverage may provide credit monitoring if data is stolen if it’s required by law.”

Once you’ve nailed down your legal requirements, create a disaster management plan so you’re ready if your protection plan goes sideways. Spell out whom you’ll have to notify, how you must do that, and whether there are disclosures or remedial measures you must offer.



practices you should adopt.

In addition to meeting your legal requirements, Nimkoff recommends sound practices you can implement starting today:

For the love of all that’s holy, avoid open WiFi!

Surely, you’ve heard this one before, but it still happens because, what’s the harm, really?

“One of the easiest ways to do this—and I know people hear it all the time, but they just can’t help themselves—is not to use open WiFi,” advises Nimkoff. “How many of us pop into the Starbucks and get onto the WiFi so we can download this big file? It’s something we’ve been waiting for, and we want to see what’s in the file. I completely avoid WiFi and suggest our members do, too.”

Too tempting? Fine, check your devices when you’re out, but use a portable hotspot. “Then you’re using your own connection,” says Nimkoff. “Many phones now have a built-in hotspot. If you’re getting a new phone, look at whether it has a hotspot-enabling capability.

“And with so many unlimited data plans and ones where you can use a huge amount of data, you don’t need to go somewhere and use open WiFi,” he says. “We shouldn’t be compromising somebody else’s privacy for two minutes of our time.”

Don’t let others peek.

“It’s not just open WiFi, but if you’re sitting in a public place working on your laptop, you never know who’s sitting next to you,” says Nimkoff. “They make these things for screens called privacy filters that most agents don’t think of using. But for under \$50, you can avoid others seeing what’s on your screen.

“Maybe it’s something simple, like a name and address that’s visible,” he explains. “But what if it’s personally identifiable information that others can see?”



And maybe the person sitting next to you doesn't have ill intent," adds Nimkoff. "But maybe they know Joe, whose information is on your screen, and they didn't realize Joe earns \$150,000. It's not for us to haphazardly open up whatever document in a way that others can see."

Don't email documents that contain client information.

"It seems like every step along the way, from the brokers to the closing agents to the lenders, everybody wants everybody else to use their secure system, and sometimes that gets a little frustrating," admits Nimkoff. "But to just send personal information across the internet without using something like a virtual private network is just not responsible."

If you must email sensitive information, do it only protected by a VPN, or secure it by using an email encryption service, such as SecureZIP or Virtru.

Tell clients what you'll send and when.

"With the title company fraud issue that can arise at the last minute, all of us in the transaction need to educate consumers from day one by saying, 'This is where the funds will be wired to, and there's rarely a change in where that will go. If you get any directions to change that, call me or the

title company with these numbers—don't call a number in an email that tells you where to wire it instead,'" advises Nimkoff.

"That's where we can all fall down if we're not careful."

Strengthen all of your passwords.

People still aren't as diligent with passwords as they should be," says Nimkoff. "Too often, it's your mother's maiden name, your kids' birthday, and all of this is so public. We're on Facebook talking about our kids, Joe and Suzy, and our password is Joe and Suzy."

Maybe that's OK for ordinary citizens who aren't opening emails with consumers' personal information in them, but we need to use strong passwords, and we need to change them frequently," he adds. "Yes, it's a bit of a hassle, but get over it. It doesn't even take a minute if you have to change your password; what does it take, 10-15 seconds? Think of all the time, aggravation, ill will, and liability that comes with not doing it."

"We need to be diligent," asserts Nimkoff. "It's not like we're sitting here as Joe or Jane Citizen. We have a higher obligation under many state laws, and we need to take that seriously. We REALTORS® who are entrusted with sensitive information have to be diligent every day." 🐟

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

Have a Listing That's Keeping You Up at Night? Your Colleagues' Did, Too

When it comes to challenging transactions, these agents say they're the "winners," if you want to put their dilemmas in the post positive light.

You've surely had at least one listing in your career that tested every bit of real estate and sales skill you've developed. You know, the kitchen that stumps every person who walks in because it's oddly designed, smaller than a bread basket, or just disturbingly unappealing.

Still, you must do your job and figure out a way to get that listing sold. That's exactly what these agents did when they were faced with a listing they knew would require their most creative problem-solving skills. Check out their interesting solutions.

Don't be afraid of the truth

"I had a property a few years ago that backed up to a major highway. It was a Parade of Homes award winner and nothing short of stunning.

An agent had the listing before me and couldn't get it sold. When you looked at the listing online, it appeared there was a lot of space between the home and the highway, which there was, but you could still hear the highway traffic vividly when outside. Obviously, that wasn't mentioned in the original listing.

Our approach was to face this issue up front. We didn't want a bunch of showings from people who were hoping you couldn't hear the highway or who wouldn't ever consider a home with highway noise. We put right in the listing, "Wondering

why this home is so affordable? Are you willing to hear some highway noise to get a spectacular, award-winning home at an amazing price?"

We got fewer showings over the next week, but shortly after, we found the buyers. They didn't care about highway noise. They didn't spend much time outside, and the house had everything they needed at a spectacular price."—*Dale Moody, broker, Cornerstone Properties, Raleigh, N.C.*

The kitchen in the attic (that's not a typo)
"One of the most challenging listings I've faced was a filthy fixer upper—the only thing it had going for it was that it was in one of the hottest neighborhoods of the city. The house was run down, filthy, and best of all, the kitchen was in the attic!

First, we had the seller move out and clean from top to bottom before we started the listing process. Once the home was vacant, we had 3D renderings done of the kitchen where it should have been. The renderings showed the house with a modern kitchen, fresh paint, and virtual furniture.

Once we knew buyers could see the potential, we marketed the house to first-time buyers as an investment or flip using a renovation loan. We sold the house in a few days for over asking price."—*Fallanne Jones, team leader, The Property Girls Team of Keller Williams, Greater Rochester, N.Y.*



Words you never want to hear: “What were they thinking?”

“Not too long ago, I had a listing for a classic Las Vegas home that was built in the 1970s. In the master bedroom, the original home designer installed a grandiose bathtub. It looked out of place and, in my opinion, was an eyesore. There the tub was, just sitting misplaced in the corner of the bedroom.

When I walked a potential buyer through for the first time, the first comment when we walked into the bedroom was, ‘What were they thinking?’

I thought people would be able to look past the bathtub with some imagination, but clearly that wasn’t going to happen.

After that showing, I immediately placed a phone call to a professional staging company. Together, we turned that bathtub into an elegant focal point of room and marketed the room as ‘boudoir elegance.’

The staging worked. The property sold in just 21 days to an all-cash buyer who paid 98 percent of the asking price.”—*Lee Riseman, agent, Luxury Estates International, Las Vegas*

The home’s lived-in—literally

“The biggest property-related challenge I’ve overcome was selling a one-bedroom condo while tenants were still living there.

It was small condo at 630 square feet with two adults and a child living there. The living room was being used as a master bedroom. There was a lot of furniture, and there were a lot of toys. There weren’t any windows in the kitchen, so it was dark.

My solution was to hire a professional photographer. He worked with the owner to light and stage each room. The pictures came out great, and we received an offer within a couple of weeks.

I’ve overcome other challenges by asking for advice from my managers and other agents in my office. I’ve heard so many strange stories and try to learn from everyone else’s experiences by paying attention to how they solved a problem and asking them if they’d do anything differently.”

—*Doug Milch, agent, Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Commonwealth, Natick, Mass.*

Listing Strategies

A lot of trouble. Get it? “Lot” trouble

“There was a home in my neighborhood that had been on and off the market for two years, with five different brokerages. This was a very lovely home; however, it was on a horrible lot. You could jump off the deck into the drainage pond and then hop onto the four-lane parkway.

I finally received ‘the call’ in September from my neighbor asking if we could meet. We walked through the home and then sat down for me to explain how I’d sell their house. I explained that essentially the same pictures had been on the internet for two years and that we needed to reinvent their home.

I told them we’d remove most of their furniture, paint the entire interior Worldly Gray with white trim, and then I’d bring in staging furniture to create an entirely new look.

When I listed the house in December, instead of using the exterior front photo that had been the feature picture five times previously, I used an interior shot of their beautiful, open foyer that showcased gorgeous archways and transom windows. We had a ratified contract in one week and closed in three weeks.” —*Gail Romansky, agent, Pearson Smith Realty, Ashburn, Va.*

The pictures do it justice

“I recently had a beautiful penthouse condo listed for sale that had a tower under construction directly in front of the building. The view was changing tremendously, and the neighborhood had other construction projects that will eventually be built in the next 5-10 years. Within the first week of having the listing, I realized that the view blockage was a major obstacle even though I explained the future of the neighborhood in detail to every buyer who toured the home.

After brainstorming with my team, we decided it would be helpful to have some visuals printed up to help buyers understand the grand vision of the neighborhood. We created a large, poster-size presentation with color renderings that showed the affect of the buildings so prospective buyers could understand the future growth in the area.



And to build excitement, I also showed visuals of new waterfront developments that will add billions of investment to the neighborhood. Within a month of adding the visuals, the seller received a strong offer for the property, and the rest is history.” —*Richard Combs, managing broker, Hunter & Maddox International, San Diego*

Start with your weakness

“When you have a challenging listing, it’s important to highlight the positives while acknowledging the negatives.

We had a duplex listing earlier this year where the bottom floor was effectively the basement. One of the downstairs bedrooms had only a small window at street level. It was legally a bedroom, but most buyers were disappointed with it. When we took buyers downstairs, we’d start with that

bedroom and then move into the master, which opened up into the private backyard, which is a rare find in New York City. The master bedroom could usually make up for the other bedroom. Once we'd moved on from that, we'd mention the significant tax abatement that would continue for the next 17 years—a huge plus that often went overlooked by buyers since they mostly look at the pictures online.

When we finished, most buyers left feeling pretty good about the unit, and we were able to get the price the seller was looking for despite a slower market.”—*James McGrath, agent, Yoreevo, New York City*

What's up with spas in the bedroom?

“We had a beautiful, renovated Mediterranean house in Miami Beach with a two-bedroom guest house. We faced major plumbing issues that took weeks to locate and then fix, and in the meantime I'd go early, crank up the air-conditioning, spray ozium spray, and air out the house because it smelled bad.

After the first inspection, the buyer's inspector insisted the house had spalling in the crawlspace and needed a \$70,000 fix without even analyzing the house fully. Even though the house was built in 1925, there were no cracks in the stucco, and there were no telltale bad stucco fixes over the cracks. We hired an engineering firm who gave the house a clear structural report and filed it with the city, which is notoriously tough. We finally sold the house to local buyers who loved it.

The moral of that story is to hold off on advertising a house being remodeled unless you see all the permits, receipts, and so on and the seller knows exactly what was done and not done. It's better to say the home has a new kitchen, baths, or floors and to let the buyer have an inspection to determine the condition of other items.

Also, we deal with problem layouts all the time. One recent listing had a ginormous Jacuzzi bath tub in the sitting area of the master bedroom next to the good-sized, updated master bathroom. The house had been owned by the archdiocese and was a convent, and it had been added onto badly.

I loved the tub and didn't mind the smaller master bedroom, but buyers couldn't see beyond it. So we virtually staged the sitting area by virtually taking the tub out and replacing it with a lovely sitting and dressing area and virtually adding European closets.

We printed that image on a large poster board and displayed it on an easel during showings. Buyers need the extra help envisioning a space, and we can provide that.”—*Madeleine Romanello, agent, Compass, Miami*

Let the buyers choose the fixes

“My greatest real estate challenge was in 2012 for a house in Worcester, Mass. I went in to do a market analysis and list the home and met with the owner, an older woman who was a sweetheart.

Her husband had passed years ago and had redone most of the house, including the walls, woodwork and kitchen. But he'd never gotten to most of the flooring. It was plywood and old, thin boards that looked awful.

After pondering for a while, I decided to treat it like a new construction. We got samples and pricing on installation and left them in the house. We included new flooring in the price of the home, and the buyers got to select the color of their carpet and other features.

It worked like a gem. I sold the house quickly—in 19 days—and for just 1 percent below asking price.”—*Cheryl Eidinger-Taylor, president, ERA Key Realty Services, Northbridge, Mass.*

YouTube: It's Not Just for Cute Animal Videos

Here's how agents are using this site to more successfully connect with consumers without spending much money to achieve that goal.

You probably head to YouTube several times a day, perhaps without even knowing it. It's the largest host of videos online, so when you click on that adorable kitten video, odds are the video is hosted by YouTube.

It's also a huge hub for businesses attempting to connect with consumers, and that includes real estate agents. Here, agents and marketing experts discuss the types of content they're posting to YouTube and the results they're getting.

An "animated" agent

"I create real estate animations such as ["How To Buy An Apartment In NYC"](#) and ["How To Rent An Apartment In NYC"](#) for my YouTube account called The New York City Broker.

I also have videos describing the differences between co-ops and condos since the buying and selling process is significantly different in New York City than in other parts of the country and the world. In addition, I include newsletters, holiday greetings, and comedic animated sketches about real estate.

First-time home buyers especially love it, but even experienced buyers and investors usually gain at least one piece of information they didn't already know.

The cost isn't that great because I create them all myself, but it took a long time to learn

everything. I decided on animated videos so I don't have to worry about lighting, sound equipment, or weather. I can do everything from my computer.

I post the videos on different social media platforms and have gotten clients from them. I think it's important to be versatile with that you do. I make a lot more money from people contacting me and buying or selling an apartment with me than I would from the potential ad revenue online.

I think using such platforms as YouTube is important because it provides an opportunity to strengthen relationships with your customers and allows you to separate yourself from the rest of the industry."

– Brett Ari Fischer, associate broker,
Lee & Associates Residential NYC,
New York City

Two ways to use YouTube

"We use YouTube to target and retarget potential customers through Google Ads. It's very helpful because you can refine your audience to someone lower down in the sales funnel who's more likely to transact.

If you're not using YouTube for ads, there are plenty of free tutorials online, or you can even call a support number for Google to help set it up if you aren't tech savvy.



I believe there are two perceptions on how to 'use' videos on YouTube. The more common one is simply creating new content and posting it to your YouTube channel. We definitely do this through customer [testimonial](#), [informational](#), and [explanatory](#) videos. They cost approximately \$2,500, \$1,500, and \$200, respectively.

The cost is mainly for the filming and editing crew and can range significantly more or less depending on quality. And unless you're a broker on million-dollar listings, you probably won't get that many views by just posting to YouTube or sharing. You need distribution.

The second and less well-known way to use YouTube is to advertise on it with your videos. What does this mean? You can target potential customers by having your video play as an ad in between other videos. Everyone has seen these ads and sometimes clicked on 'skip ad.' However,

sometimes you watch the entire ad and click through to learn more. These ads typically cost between \$.10 and \$.30 per view.

Who are your ads shown to? It depends. You can target a certain audience, for example, of people who are interested in real estate, specific websites, or keywords that users search

In addition, you can re-target users who've visited your website. This is done by embedding a piece of code on your website that anonymously follows your website visitors so Google can show your ads to them all over the internet (including on YouTube).

Analytics show that ads that are used to retarget a website visitor tend to outperform general targeting because the user is already familiar with your brand."

—Leon Goldfeld, co-founder, Yoreevo,
New York City

4 reasons YouTube is a must

“We create a lot of video content and have found YouTube the best place to host the videos for a few reasons. Our videos are either real-estate-education based, or we tour a property or community to highlight the specific features in a compelling fashion. Here’s why we love YouTube:

- The auto-caption feature on YouTube is superior to other video-hosting platforms.
- By uploading videos to YouTube with relevant tags and titles, it helps with our SEO.
- The links are easier to share on YouTube than other platforms. If you share a Facebook link or LinkedIn link, the user must be a member of those sites to see the content. YouTube doesn’t have this restriction.
- The analytics YouTube provides are fascinating. It has the demographics of your viewers along with how many minutes each particular video was watched.

We find it important to create good content and upload natively across all platforms, but for these reasons, YouTube is a must.”

—Andrew Udem, owner/managing partner, Sure Group of RE/Max Sails, Baltimore

Seeing is believing with video

“Businesses say, ‘Show me the money,’ and customers say, ‘Show me what you’re selling.’ Unless marketing content has the visual variety, you’re bound to lose out.

Why? Human beings are visual creatures. Seeing is believing. People hate to read long text and blogs. Everyone’s busy.

Hence, creating videos of your marketing content is absolutely vital. Real estate professionals use YouTube to:

- Showcase unique listings
- Post educational guides for buyers, sellers, owners, and renters, including maintenance tips
- Share knowledge of the industry, report company news, discuss industry trends, and provide updates on the latest laws

Here’s how you can get started:

- More than just creating videos, you have to make sure they’re high quality. Make sure you have the resources, skill sets, and time to produce videos on topics that bring value to your followers.
- Identify content in other formats that would make more impact through video.
- Try to explain concepts that are hard to understand in other formats.
- Create engaging content that resonates with your audience. Focus on engagement and prompt followups on comments that viewers post.
- Always have a good call to action at the end of the video.”

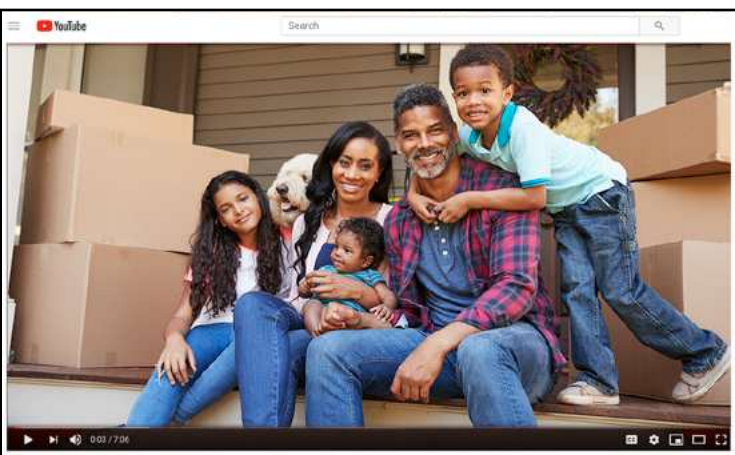
—Chuck Hattemer, co-founder and chief marketing officer, Onerent, San Jose, Calif.

People come and then stay longer

“I’m currently using YouTube for content marketing and also to link to videos in my written blogs for those who prefer to watch content versus reading it. I have a blog where I write about popular real estate questions or

topics. The most popular video I have on my channel right now is regarding [minimum down payment and mortgage rules](#).

The cost to create a video has been next to nothing, and the only cost I put in was toward a mini tripod to hold my phone up for filming, which cost less than \$50. I don't have a staffer hired to edit and upload the videos. I simply cover all the content on a particular topic in one take and upload it to YouTube as is.



When I started the vlogging, the purpose of the YouTube videos was to supplement the information I already had on my blog and keep users on the page for longer. The analytics have showed a lower bounce rate with YouTube videos and a longer time on the page, which is overall helping our Google rankings for our website as a whole.

If you're just starting out on YouTube, remember that it's more about the content than lighting, effects, or editing. If you're feeling like you don't have the right production and that's stopping you from connecting with consumers through YouTube, it's important to know that good content will always draw consumers and that production is supplementary to that."
—Mariko Baerg, agent, Bridgwell Group, Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada

New series draws more attention

"As an internet marketer for 10 years, I've used YouTube in the past to help build an audience. At Cladwell.com, I helped build the channel to 20,000-plus subscribers.

I've used some of those same techniques to build a lot of search-engine-optimization based videos that help answer consumers' questions on buying and selling houses.

However, what I'm really excited about is a new series I'm launching called [Home Stories](#), where families share the story of their home, how they bought it, the challenges, and how it's shaping their family.

Beyond being better stories that will boost watch time on YouTube—its number-one metric—they're also inherently shareable with the family's social network. So it allows me to reach more consumers.

Here are some tips for creating your own successful videos:

- Start creating. It's easy to get bogged down in what equipment you should use. Just start making content, and you'll learn as you go. People don't expect you to be great when you begin.
- Find a mentor. I use my friend Tim Schmoyer at Video Creators, who gives incredible content on how to grow your channel.
- Time block. It's incredibly hard to keep creating the content when you're busy and active. Time block your video creation schedule, and fight to stick to it.

What does this cost me? I got a Canon Rebel as a gift. It's better for photos but does the job for

Technology

now. I bought a cheap microphone and tripods. All told, I've spent under \$100, plus a lot of time and sweat equity. For now, I'm still editing myself in iMovie. These are skills I've learned along the way as an internet marketer.

My watch time and subscribers on YouTube are fairly low. I've been trying to brainstorm why people would subscribe to a real estate channel, since you normally just get the information you need, make the purchase or sale, and move on. However, if there's good storytelling, there may be a reason to subscribe and come back.

My first Home Story spiked my watch time. Out of 21 videos, these first Home Story videos—, which were two episodes—are my number-two and number-three best-performing videos. They're performing well for watch time, view duration, and percentage viewed.

I'm also posting the videos on Facebook. Because my YouTube channel is still small, I'm seeing a larger impact here. Essentially, I'm doing collaborations not with other YouTube channels but with the people's social networks. It was by far my best post ever in terms of reach, engagement, and minutes viewed on Facebook by multiple factors."

—Eric Sztanyo, agent, Team Sztanyo, Keller Williams Advisors Realty, Cincinnati

If you have to explain it again, do a video

"We have a rule on the team: If you need to explain the same thing more than once, we need a video of it.

I've been using YouTube for a few years now [<https://www.YouTube.com/channel/UCT6e-v4Op37lKCinYiApCyg>]. Mostly it's a library of educational videos. I send at least two educational videos a month to our entire database, and every one gets added to that YouTube library.

I've had many people say to me things like, "I've seen your stuff online for years, and you're the only person I'd call," and I believe it's directly the result of those videos.

I use YouTube to house all our educational content and have created a library of material we can share with our clients and prospects. Everything from monthly market updates to steps in the home buying and selling process is hosted on our company video page.

I've never even considered another host site because of YouTube's ubiquity and simplicity. I don't have the time or the interest to explore other platforms. YouTube is free, it interfaces with everything, and because it's owned by Google, there could be some added SEO benefits. (I don't know that for certain, but it wouldn't surprise me.)

We spend very little time on production (Vyril Marketing is our preferred outsource vendor for this), we use no special equipment (our iPhones and a tripod are sufficient), and we don't spend any energy on analytics. I'm not saying that's a good thing. I'm just saying we put all our energy toward our clients, and the video is but a piece of that puzzle."

—Aaron Hendon, Christine & Co., Keller Williams, Seattle



John D. Mayfield
CRBsm, e-PRO[®], GRIsm

Postcard from a Friend

Category: Professional Development

Materials Needed: Handouts included with meeting materials, flip chart, blank index cards or blank sheets of paper for all attendees, stapler

Estimated Time: 15-20 minutes

PowerPoint Available: No

Meeting Objective: To help your team share experiences and solutions for overcoming obstacles in their career.

INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S MEETING

Explain to your group that today's meeting will be a little different than your normal meeting. Today, everyone is going to write a postcard (or letter) to a friend.

This "make believe" friend is a successful real estate agent in another part of the country. This is a friend you admire a lot and who has helped you from time to time with your career. Unfortunately, your friend is on a trip for the next month at a private island with no telephone service. The only way you can communicate with this friend is by the U.S. postal service.

STEP 1

Write a short letter to your friend explaining your current real estate career. Explain to your friend some of the difficulties and trials you're presently facing as a real estate professional, and ask your friend for advice on how to get your career back on track.

Be brief, and try to keep your postcard or letter as concise as possible.

Note: Please ask your group to be sure not to put their name on their postcard or letter.

STEP 2

After enough time has elapsed for everyone to write their letters, collect the letters. Then redistribute the letters to your team members, making sure no one gets their own letter back.

STEP 3

Have your group use the backside of the letter or a clean piece of paper that can be stapled to the original letter to write a reply they feel would be helpful to their friend struggling with their career. Ask them to offer as many practical and helpful solutions as possible to get their friend out of a real estate slump.

STEP 4

After everyone has finished writing their responses and suggestions, allow time for discussion with your group. Ask for volunteers to summarize in a nutshell what their friend's real estate struggles are and the suggestions they recommended.

As you debrief this session with your team, ask for others to share ideas that might help the person get their career back on track. Continue to debrief with others until you're ready to close the meeting.



CLOSING

Share this quote:

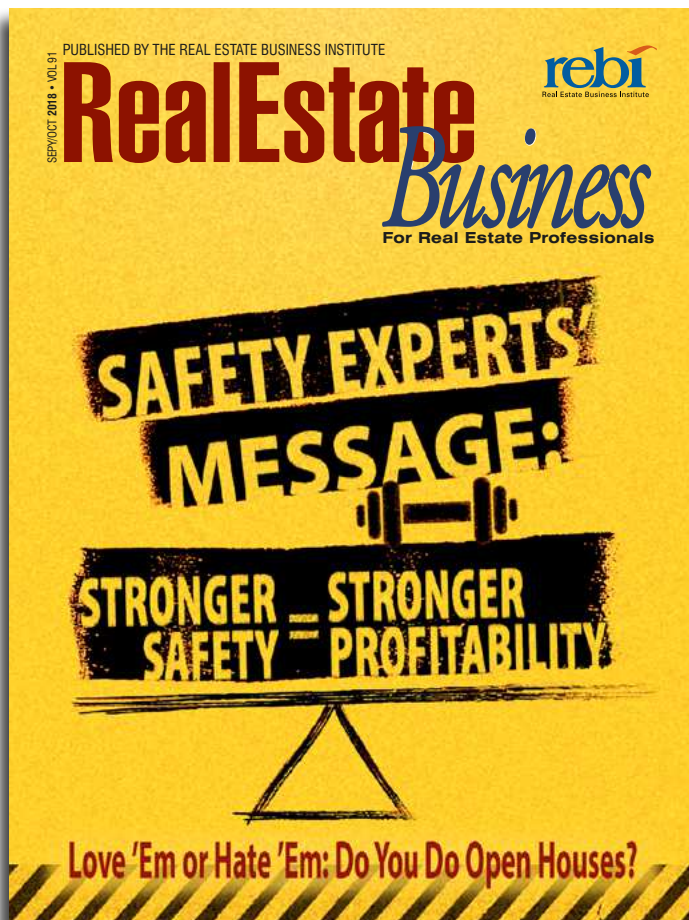
“I have friends in overalls whose friendship I would not swap for the favor of the kings of the world.” —Thomas Edison

Conclude by encouraging your group to apply some of the great ideas listed today in their daily lives and to always be looking for new ways to correct and improve their real estate career.

“A loyal friend laughs at your jokes when they’re not so good and sympathizes with your problems when they’re not so bad.”

—Arnold H. Glasgow

John Mayfield, CRBSM, e-PRO[®], GRISM, received his real estate license in 1978 and has been a practicing broker since 1981. He is a senior GRISM instructor for the Missouri Association of REALTORS[®] and the Arkansas Association of REALTORS[®] and is a master instructor for the Real Estate Business Institute (REBI). John has been a featured speaker at the National Association of REALTORS[®] conventions, authored seven books, and created the “5-Minutes Series for Real Estate Agents.” For more information, contact www.easysalesmeetings.com.



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