

WISCONSIN EDITION

TOP AGENT

MAGAZINE

24-HOUR
TOUCH-UPS
to Maximize
Your Price List

COVER STORY

LAURA
FLOOD

FEATURED AGENT

ANTHONY
WOODEN

BE THEIR
REALTOR®
FOR LIFE:

How to Build a
Relationship with
Your Clients that
Will Last a Lifetime

Take My
Word For It:

The Power of Testimonials &
Making Word-of-Mouth Count

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LAURA FLOOD



ANTHONY WOODEN

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Be Their REALTOR® for Life:

How to Build a Relationship with Your Clients That Will Last a Lifetime

In the world of real estate, an agent's relationship with their clients can make or break their career. This industry revolves around working well with people, and being able to develop a strong relationship with your clients is the foundation that your business is based upon. Just like with a house, if that foundation is weak, the rest of the structure is also going to be unsteady and fragile. The mark of a good REALTOR® is their ability to build up a good referral network and following of loyal clients. This isn't something that just happens by accident. Building healthy, strong relationships with your clients takes work and knowing how to gain another person's trust, respect, and friendship. Here are some ways to make sure you are building the right kind of relationship with your clients.

1. Use Your Friendliness and Optimism to Win Them Over:

No one wants a pushy, overly confident salesperson for a REALTOR®. Clients are much more inclined to put their trust in the hands of someone who is friendly when it comes to one of the biggest financial transactions of their lives. A pleasant, outgoing disposition will win you more clients as well as friends. You want to establish rapport in the first few minutes of first meeting prospective clients. Rather than starting with business right off the bat, begin your meeting with some small talk such as similar interests, hobbies, and family life. This will immediately help to put your clients at ease, and show that you are not simply trying to “sell” them something.

People also respond well to optimism. During what can be a very stressful time, clients need someone to help them stay positive when a situation looks difficult and challenging. Optimism also tends to radiate charisma, and people want to be around and do business with charismatic people. You want to learn how to understand, motivate, and inspire people.

2. Be an Inquisitive Learner and an Empathetic Listener:

Don't be afraid to show your curiosity and ask your clients a lot of questions. Some of these questions may even be difficult and uncomfortable. You want to discover and learn as much as you can about your client. Don't make the mistake of jumping straight into the role of the know-it-all. Every different client has unique needs, so you want to learn as much as you can about their specific situation before trying to propose a solution. You want to uncover their primary motive for buying or selling, and flush

out any potential concerns they might have. After you've gained as much information as possible, you can then gauge their interest in your possible solutions by asking “what if” questions. Being inquisitive also demonstrates to your clients that you are genuinely interested and invested in their situation.

On the other side of this coin is knowing how to listen empathetically. Empathy involves actually putting yourself or your mind in their shoes so you can genuinely understand their concerns, needs, and opinions. That understanding and empathy is then reflected in your conversation with that client. Your clients want to know that you care about their situation, and that they're not just another sale for you to make. People are much more willing to put their trust in you when they can sense that you are actually making an effort to feel what they feel in order to understand their situation.

Showing your interest through questions, and then thoughtfully listening goes a long way towards gaining trust. Showing empathy and acknowledging the feelings and emotions involved in your clients situation helps build a relationship founded on genuine care and trust.

3. Watch for Nonverbal Clues:

Most communication happens nonverbally, so knowing how to interpret your client's body language can be incredibly helpful. Here are a few things to pay special attention to:

Eye contact: Be careful with the level of eye contact you use with clients when first meeting. Too much and too little eye contact can send the wrong impression. You want to try and maintain eye contact around 70 percent of the time. That is the amount that most people are comfortable with. Pay attention to your client's level of eye



contact to determine how comfortable they are. When someone avoids eye contact that could mean they are not engaged in the conversation. A good way to quickly build a feeling of rapport when first meeting clients is to make eye contact when you first meet them and then start nodding yes to what they're saying. If the client reciprocates the eye contact and nodding, you've established a connection.

Choose the right handshake for each client:

One handshake does not fit all people, and that first handshake can be crucial to making a good first impression. The way to do a good handshake for each client is to try and mirror the other person's handshake in strength, keep your shoulders aligned as you are preferably standing when you shake hands. While you shake your client's hand make sure you make eye contact and give them a sincere smile.

4. Prove your honesty and credibility:

Honesty and integrity are the two traits that 98 percent of buyers and sellers report are qualities they consider "very important". The thing is you can say you have these traits all you want on your website, bio, etc., but trust has to be earned, and the only way to do this is to prove your credibility.

Showing a little weakness can actually be to your advantage in this situation, and will actually make others more inclined view you as honest. You don't want to come across as too good to be true. When revealing this weakness, however, the key to coming out on top is turning what sounds like a weakness into a strength. For example, your service may be more expensive, but that's because you offer more personalized and extra services than your competitors.

Here are a few tips for how to sound more credible:

When you talk to your clients avoid using filler words such as "um" and "uh", which can decrease your credibility. You also want to watch the tone of your voice. People tend to translate a deeper tone as sounding more credible.

You want to develop a relationship to last a lifetime when interacting with your clients. There are many things you can do to accomplish this, and using these tips can take you from getting just a few referrals and repeat customers to gaining a loyal client following. Taking the little extra time to make sure you are projecting the right attitude and making sure that you are doing things to gain your client's trust can make a world of difference for your business.

TOP AGENT

MAGAZINE

A portrait of Laura Flood, a woman with dark, wavy hair and a bright smile, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved top. She is seated in front of a light-colored, tufted chair back. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

LAURA
FLOOD



Ranked in the top one-percent of Century 21 agents in the nation, Laura Flood has twenty-five years experience serving communities in Southeastern Wisconsin.

Laura Flood loved real estate from the moment she started with Century 21 back in 1995. “I knew I wanted to be one of the best, which meant providing clients with exceptional service and consistent results. Buying and selling real estate can be a stressful, inconvenient time for people. Our

team’s goal is to utilize our knowledge and experience to help buyers and sellers get the best possible price and terms.” After twenty-five years serving the Jefferson, Dane, Waukesha, Dodge, and Rock County communities in Southeastern Wisconsin, Laura’s instincts have guided both her and



her clients well. For many years now, she has been ranked in the top one-percent of Century 21 agents in the nation, with sixty percent of her business coming from repeat clients and referrals. Her volume in sales averages 16 million annually.

An experienced and happy team has been crucial to that success. “We’ve cultivated a family-first, motivating work environment. Our people love their jobs. That means a lot to me. We put them in a position to succeed, assigning them responsibilities aligned to



"We've cultivated a family-first, motivating work environment. Our people love their jobs. That means a lot to me. We put them in a position to succeed, assigning them responsibilities aligned to their strengths, which in turn provides our clients with the attention to detail they deserve."

their strengths, which in turn provides our clients with the attention to detail they deserve."

The team is continuously adapting to events that influence the market and utilizing all available tools to showcase a client's home. Laura and her team use traditional mailings and social media platforms and they are ever alert for new ways to provide a superior level of service for both buyers and sellers. "Especially during this time of Covid, it's been important for people to be able to see as much of a property as they can before even setting foot in the house. We partner with photographers who specialize in drone and video marketing to feature both the interior and exterior of properties."



Laura's Real Estate Group has also tried to ease the impact of Covid on the communities it serves. "Giving back has always been one of our core values," Laura explains. "During these uncertain times,

to lift spirits, we gave away twenty-five dollar gift cards for local businesses to members of our community for every day children were in virtual school. We've also supported our health care professionals,



first responders, teachers, and police, hosting events at coffee shops where we buy them a cup of coffee and a muffin. It's such an amazing feeling to give back and help drive traffic to our local businesses."

When not working, Laura loves spending time with her husband, two children, and their miniature Irish doodle. "Home is my happy place," she laughs.

Going forward, Laura wants to keep serving her area, continue expanding her team, and lend her experience to new agents entering the field. "I love what I do every day. It's such a high when you can get your seller multiple offers with the best price and terms or help a buyer secure a home they love. And to be able to share that feeling with other people and give them the opportunity to make a great income—that's the next level for me."



If you want to get in touch with Laura for help selling your property, please text/call at 920-988-9767, or email at laura@laurasrealestategroup.com. For property listings and helpful resources, be sure to check out her website at laurasrealestategroup.com



24-Hour Touch-ups to Maximize Your List Price

Sometimes it takes a full-scale overhaul to prepare a house for market. Other times, only a series of small adjustments are required to make a listing's true potential shine. Whether you're gearing up for an open house, assessing a list price, or maximizing a property's appearance prior to photography—the devil is in the details. However, touch-ups and refreshes don't have to dominate your schedule or break the bank. For a few ideas of where

to begin, consider our handy check-list below for quick home projects that will fortify your bottom line.

Refresh grout for a sparkling clean look.

Perhaps the quickest and most cost-effective way to make bathrooms, kitchens, and other tiled areas shine is to refresh grout until it looks

good as new. Specialty grout stain removers and cleaners are inexpensive and sold at most home improvement stores. Plus, the project only takes a bit of elbow grease and an hour or two for a major makeover effect. Suddenly, dark, stained, and worn-down bathrooms gleam as if tile has just been placed.

Create mood lighting with soothing bulbs and fixtures.

A warm white light from specially chosen LED bulbs creates a welcoming environment when potential buyers come calling. If outdated fixtures are bringing down a home's otherwise modern styling, consider more design-neutral replacements that won't

detract from the property's charms. These are inexpensive but highly noticeable and impactful upgrades that shift a home's ambiance for the better.

Repaint doors for an updated and inviting entryway.

It may sound like a hassle, but repainting doorways with a fresh coat signals a well-kept property—and that's before prospective buyers even pass through the threshold. You can also change out generic doorknobs and switch-plates to add an updated flare while on a budget. Color-of-the-year trend choices can turn heads, while neutral paint choices signal less hassle for future homeowners.



Make windows shine—both inside *and* out.

Cleanliness goes a long way in communicating a well-cared for home in which buyers can imagine themselves. Cleaning the inside *and* outside of windows not only refreshes a room, but it allows light to infuse the space while appealing to the move-in ready crowd.

Closet spaces are not an afterthought.

Every prospective buyer wants storage options, and you've surely led a home tour where guests inspect closets and pantries. Don't let these hidden spaces go overlooked. Make sure they're clean, cleared as much as possible, and you can even touch them up with fresh paint, a good

scrub, or with the addition of new shelves or styled bulbs.

Remove tough appliance stains with a bit of elbow grease.

If you're packaging appliances with the sale of a property, you'll want to make sure those big-ticket items are also in top shape to showcase their value. Stainless steel polish, electric cooktop polish, and stain removing pads for the kitchen sink can make your appliances look five years younger with nothing more than an hour or two's labor.

Organize garage and basement areas to maximize storage and hint at bonus space.

It may take a labor of love, but organizing and decluttering these special storage spaces





can add significant value to a property. Instead of telling prospective buyers how much storage space there is—let these areas speak for themselves by giving them a neutral, airy bout of cleansing. That way, craft-lovers, car aficionados, and buyers with interest in renovating basement areas can witness the potential immediately.

Individually, these bit to-do list items might seem like extra work without the promise of

a major return. But combined? These small tasks go a long way in crafting a home's image and projecting pure potential. After all, prospective buyers imagine their lives unfolding inside those walls. That's why cobbling together these small-scale projects can have a big payoff in the end. Not only will a home present itself in a cohesive, attractively-packaged form, but it can also translate to higher interest and a significant pay-off—in more ways than one.

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ANTHONY WOODEN

Anthony Wooden began his real estate career 15 years ago, though his passion for sales started much earlier than that. "I started my sales habits at the age of 8," Anthony recalls, "knocking on the neighbors' doors selling my lawn care and snow removal services. Soon so many neighboring neighborhoods sought out my services, I had to hire my father!" Now, as broker-owner of Only Real Estate Group, Anthony is happy to be able to share his passion for real estate with his clients, helping them and their families achieve their real estate goals.



Anthony and his team serve Southern Wisconsin, primarily covering Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, Walworth, and Waukesha counties. He is also licensed in multiple states so he can go where his clients need him. "My team and I are defined by integrity, energy, hard work, and creative service in every detail of your real estate transaction," he explains. "I have worked every aspect of the industry representing sellers, buyers, investors, and banks, in luxury residential and commercial markets. I believe that the skills and experiences I have gained along with previous experiences make me an ideal candidate to represent you in your real estate transaction."

About 80% of Anthony's business comes from repeat clients, a truly impressive feat that speaks to the trust and confidence he inspires. "I've had a lot of clients tell me that I really listen and pay attention to them," he says. "At the outset of a transaction, I always have a conversation with the buyer or seller to find out what their true needs are. Clients often tell me afterward that it was nice to deal with someone who's so authentic and transparent."

Anthony strives to bring value to his clients from the very beginning. For example, he says, "I have a background in building homes, so my walkthrough prior to listing a

home is very insightful and helpful to the seller." On the buyer side, he says, "When searching for homes for my clients, I've probably sold more homes that were off the market than I have homes that were on the market. I leave no stone unturned and I'm very thorough on behalf of my clients."

When it comes to marketing listings, Anthony embraces technology to its fullest potential. He works with a professional photographer, who also collaborates with him on building websites for individual properties. "Once a

listing goes live, I saturate the web with as much information as possible," Anthony says. "We get a ton of views, impressions, and input back from social media on our listings."

Community involvement is important to Anthony, and he regularly volunteers with local organizations on a variety of causes. He also helps with Housing Resources, educating homebuyers about the fundamentals of real estate. When he is not working or giving back, Anthony is a family man who loves spending time with his wife, daughter and son. He loves hiking in the mountains, fishing, and going on road trips. An athlete by nature, he loves running, golf and football. He has embraced challenges from youth to the professional level, as a player and now semi-professional coach for the 9-time national champions Racine Raiders.

In the future, Anthony plans to continue growing his business and add additional hubs in new locations. "Our model is based on integrity, transparency, and taking care of clients," he says. Anthony's favorite part of real estate is "the success of watching my clients hit the endzone of that closing table. I get to watch their faces light up when they're signing those documents and have that moment of happiness and excitement. I'm all about finishing the game strong and making sure the client is happy. I always put them first."

To find out more about Anthony Wooden, call 262-770-6278,
email onlyrealestategroup@gmail.com, or visit him online at onlyrealestategroup.com

Productivity Killers: 4 Ways to Make Better Use of Your Working Hours



Even on the busiest of days, it can be hard not to get distracted by social media, smartphones, chatty colleagues, or personal to-do list items. So how do you keep your professional blinders on and power through your tasks with efficiency? Practice these four tips and witness your productivity skyrocket—easing stress and bringing renewed energy to your daily duties.

1. Create a sense of peace and quiet

The office may not be your idea of a tranquil oasis, but for most, focus requires quiet and calm to best lend attention to the task at hand. If you find yourself seated next to talkative coworkers or in the center of a bustling office atrium, consider noise can-

celing headphones, earplugs, or carving out an empty conference room for your work day. Turning the volume down creates fewer chances for disruption, allowing you to make the best use of your time.

2. Organize your workspace

A messy work area breeds anxiety and distraction, but a clean and organized desk inspires efficiency. If you've got a busy day ahead, take fifteen minutes and organize your workspace: gather miscellaneous papers into their proper place, dispose of out-of-date or unnecessary documents, or give your keyboard a dusting. Not only does cleaning and organizing your workspace prepare you for the work ahead, it also helps you transition to a productive, goal-oriented mindset.

3. Create a goal-oriented reward system

Coffee breaks, coworker catch-up, and social media check-ins tend to break up our workflow on an hourly basis. Instead of trying to go cold turkey on these workplace routines, reframe them as rewards. For every to-do list item you complete, allow yourself a five minute treat, whether that's a fresh cup of coffee or a walk around the block. Not only will creating a reward

system help you stay motivated throughout the day, it will also provide you with much-needed mental breaks that actually boost long-term productivity.

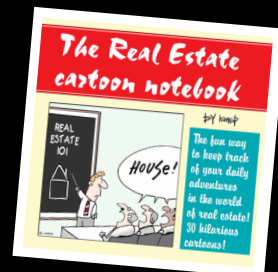
4. Take your smartphone off the table

The number one productivity killer in this day and age? Smartphones. With access to endless social media portals, web browsing, text conversations, and games, smartphones are one-stop shops for distractions. While you may not want to delete apps from your phone, try leaving your smartphone in a locked desk drawer until your next break, or safely in your car. By simply putting your smartphone out of your line of sight, the impulse to distract yourself is muted.

Even though technology and the modern office create ample opportunity for distraction, making these few small adjustments can go a long way in safeguarding your productivity. After all, a productive day allows you to enjoy your time at home and outside the office, without the worry of incomplete tasks and looming deadlines darkening your day. Keep these productivity tricks in mind as you mount your daily to-do list and you'll be thanking yourself tomorrow.

TOP AGENT

Laughs!





Take My Word for It:

The Power of Testimonials & Making Word-of-Mouth Count

Ratings, reviews, and testimonials are among the most powerful tools an agent or real estate professional has at his or her disposal. Think of it this way: almost all of us go online to get a sense of dining options, film scores, and product reviews. When it comes to real estate pros, people want the same measure of comfort and advice from those who have already experienced your services. The

bottom line is this: testimonials create a relatable emotional appeal to others, while giving potential clients some first-hand insight into your ability to deliver.

With all that in mind, consider the valuable rationale behind testimonials and word-of-mouth attention: how to harness it, and what it can do for you and your business.

Testimonials and word-of-mouth buzz build your brand

If you aren't displaying positive testimonials and reviews on your social media outlets and website, then you're missing out on a key opportunity. Those exploring your pages are likely seeking real estate representation, and reviews and testimonials serve as a first-hand glimpse into who you are and what you can do. If you can, try to tie reviews and testimonials to specific names or social media handles, as you'll be highlighting the interpersonal component at play. Think of it this way: potential clients are more likely to trust the experiences of past clients than to place blind faith in your pitch, which is crafted to create a sale. Most customers would rather look to the experience of fellow consumers before taking your word for it, sight unseen. Well-placed testimonials and personal reviews can bridge the gap when it comes to your brand and the prospective client.

Testimonials and word-of-mouth buzz demonstrate your value compared to others

Good agents are a dime a dozen, but top agents stand apart from the pack for a variety of reasons. Chief among those reasons is the ability to differentiate themselves from the norm by highlighting their personalities, their track records, their values. Testimonials and word-of-mouth buzz don't just focus on whether an experience was good or bad. It dives into the details of personality and consumer relationships. While the qualifications of many agents might be similar, you can stand out by show-

casing stellar reviews and testimonials that shine upon your character and delivery. When pitched by two agents with similar experience and credentials, but only one has the testimonials featuring positive experiences and lasting relationships—wouldn't you be more inclined to work with the agent who has a proven track record of success?

Do your homework and compile the testimonials that will drive your business

At the close of a transaction, consider providing a comment card with room for clients to write a few reflections, or create an e-mail ready online form that makes submitting feedback a breeze. You can also touch base via e-mail and ask politely for a review of their experience with you. Referred or repeat clients are excellent candidates for testimonials, as they will already know your business well, or will likely be happy to contribute their perspective. If asking for testimonials makes you cringe, you can always incentivize this process in minor ways. For example, you could offer a fun, cost-effective gift certificate in exchange for a testimonial.

Whichever way you gather testimonials that speak to your positive performance, there is no question that these documented first-hand experiences are priceless when it comes to drawing and retaining clients. If you want to inspire interest and build a living brand, there is no better method than by having clients vouch for your working style.

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