

CANADA EDITION

# TOP AGENT

MAGAZINE



1 Billion-Plus  
Reasons Why  
**YOU SHOULD  
BE ACTIVE ON  
FACEBOOK**

Things You  
Can Do to  
**ANTICIPATE  
YOUR CLIENT'S  
NEEDS**

Top Agent Tips  
and Questions for  
**CHOOSING YOUR  
LISTING AGENT**

**KEEPING  
IN TOUCH –**  
How to Stay in  
Your Clients'  
Lives for the  
Long Haul

**COVER STORY**

**BRENDA  
DEAN**

**CANADA EDITION**

# TOP AGENT MAGAZINE



**BRENDA DEAN**

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the USA, Europe, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.*



# Top Agent Tips and Questions for Choosing Your Listing Agent

Now that you've decided to sell, it's time to select the professional to help you market your property. Before meeting with agents, however, consider Top Agent Magazine's tips for preparing yourself. First, ask yourself what kind of relationship you'd like to have with your listing agent. Are you seeking a casual, personable relationship and the latest marketing tools or are you interested in a more formal, traditional relationship and approach to marketing techniques? Next, populate your list of agents by attending open houses and asking for recommendations from recent buyers and sellers. Finally, schedule your meetings at your home, where you'll be able to gauge the chemistry between you and each agent.

During your meetings, expect any Top Agent to ask you several questions, but also consider discussing the following:

## **Will you please describe your sales experience and local network?**

Ask your Top Agent to describe recent listings and sales of homes comparable to your own. Ask about the sellers' priorities, the original list price, market time and number of offers. Top Agents will also describe how well they are connected with other REALTORS® in the region as well as their contacts with relocation companies, local corporations and chambers of commerce.

## **You'll learn a lot by listening to agents' opinions.**

Be sure to ask about each agent's knowledge of how your market has changed over time and what has influenced change.

**How will you market the property?** Each Top Agent has a unique set of online or local marketing tools at his or her disposal. Some use lead-generation applications and nearly every luxury agent takes advantage of video. Even video marketing tools vary from agent-to-agent, however. You'll get to decide if you prefer an agent with higher-end video production and 3D Matterport tours or an agent with more intimate techniques featuring walk-and-talk style video tours.

**What factors influence your list-price recommendation?** Before answering this question, most Top Agents will have several questions for you, including whether you're more focused on a faster sale or a higher list price. They'll also educate you on how best to balance both market time and list price relative to sales histories your area.

**Now that you've seen the home, what repairs or improvements do you recommend before listing?** You'll learn a lot by listening to agents' opinions on your home's sale potential with or without some improvements. Most Top Agents will also recommend a full professional inspection prior to listing to avoid surprises during buyer inspection.

**How will you help with staging?** Some Top Agents will pay for part or all of the staging costs. At a minimum, however, a Top Agent will have a staging professional or two in their partner network. While they're at it, they may provide referrals for carpet cleaning, painting, gardening and other minor finishing touches.



**What attributes of the property will you want to highlight?** Each Top Agent will have a somewhat different answer to this question, but that's a good thing! Even if you have your own ideas about your home's greatest attributes, you'll glean insight into the current market by considering different agents' opinions. In learning their views, you may even change your mind about your home's most marketable features!

**What is your approach to Open Houses?** How many agent-only Open Houses will your Top Agent want to host? How many truly Open Houses? Some Top Agents may even reveal a "swankier" approach to the Open House – such as an evening cocktail party or by-invitation "open" hours to which buyers visit along with the agent representing them.

**Who will be our primary point(s) of contact from your office?** This important question will help you understand the scope of your agent's practice. You'll get to see if your agent runs a robust team with many hands on deck or if he or she works by close, one-on-one contact with each client. Either approach is wonderful; you get to decide what suits you.

Now, let's list!

# TOP AGENT

MAGAZINE



**BRENDA  
DEAN**



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Brenda Dean was recently bestowed the Hall of Fame Award by her brokerage, as well as the 2016 Silver and 2017 Gold designations by the Victoria Real Estate Board.

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2014, 2014 and 2015 100% Club Award, and 2016 and 2017 Platinum Club Award. She was also recently bestowed the Hall of Fame Award by her brokerage, as well as the 2016 Silver and 2017 Gold designations by the Victoria Real Estate Board. Today, Brenda cemented herself as an agent swiftly on the rise, with a reputation for professionalism, trustworthiness, and a passion for her idyllic community.

Brenda Dean always harbored an interest in real estate, but was waiting for the right time to strike. She'd bought her first property at the age of eighteen and immediately "caught the bug," as she remembers. She bought and sold a few more properties, and launched a few successful businesses and sold them once they were well afloat. Four years ago, the timing was finally ripe for Brenda to turn her long-held dream into a reality and earn her license. Since then, Brenda has earned numerous accolades for her work, including the RE/MAX Club Award each year since

Serving the Southern Gulf's Mayne Island, Brenda guides clients through the buying and selling process in a rather unique locale. Situated between Vancouver and Victoria, Mayne Island is home to a year-round population of about 1,000 residents, though many in the larger area flock to Mayne Island on weekends and holidays for its natural splendor on the water. Brenda's knowledge and appreciation of her home island lends itself well to her work as an agent. Not only does



she serve as an expert on the local market and inventory, but she takes time to tour with potential buyers, exploring neighborhoods and favorite local destinations to give them a true feel for life on Mayne Island. With 70% of her business generated by repeat and referral clientele, Brenda's track record is well-proven. What's more, her grounded and personalized approach to real estate puts clients at ease and takes the mystery out of what an often-stressful transactional pro-

cess. "Trust is a huge thing for me," Brenda explains. "I lay all my cards on the table and there's no secrets between my clients and I when it comes to business. I go above and beyond and give my clients the whole package. It's not just about showing them a potential house, it's also about the neighborhood and the island, too. It's a unique area, and it's helpful to educate buyers on what life is like here." Brenda's client-centric focus also informs how she keeps in touch with



those she's served in the past. In addition to reaching out by phone and one-on-one, she also hosts an annual appreciation party for clients past and present. "My clients know they can trust me," she says. "I have a calm, practical demeanor, but we always have a few laughs along the way."

To market listings, Brenda utilizes several print publications in the area by incorpo-

rating quality photography and high-end brochures. She also makes use of the leading digital listing platforms and social media to promote high visibility for online house hunters. Likewise, keeping in touch with her network of contacts and industry colleagues gets the word out about properties headed to market. Considering what she enjoys most about her career in real estate, Brenda cites the myriad opportunities to connect



*"It's not just about showing them a potential house, it's also about the neighborhood and the island, too. It's a unique area, and it's helpful to educate buyers on what life is like here."*

with others and share the grandeur of Mayne Island with future homeowners. "What I love most about what I do is meeting people," she says. "Helping them purchase a home, seeing how happy they are when they experience the

magic of Mayne Island—that's when I know I've done my job."

To give back to her tightknit local community, Brenda often sponsors events and



gatherings—like last year’s cook-off supporting various charitable causes. In her free hours, she most enjoys walking, hiking, and going out on the sailboat with her husband. Looking ahead, Brenda has plans to continue building her business and grow-

ing the Mayne Island community she calls home. With four years of proven experience behind her and a steady eye toward the road ahead, continued success is bound to follow for Brenda Dean at RE/MAX Mayne Pender.

To learn more about Brenda Dean  
visit [realestateonmayneisland.com](http://realestateonmayneisland.com),  
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visit her Facebook page here <https://www.facebook.com/RemaxMayneIsland/>

*Lisa Ehrlich, Todd Wiebe & Laurie Salvador  
are proud to congratulate*

# **BRENDA DEAN**



*on being featured for Canada  
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# 1 Billion-Plus Reasons Why You Should Be Active on Facebook

By Bubba Mills



The number is staggering and potentially career ending for REALTORS® who ignore it: 1,440,000,000. That's the total number of monthly active users on the social medium Facebook.

That number alone is reason enough to use it regularly in your real estate business. But Facebook can also help turn you into the expert in your community. Just by sharing knowledge and relevant events about the community you can become the go-to source for all things local – a perfect way to capture the attention of prospective buyers.

Plus, Facebook advertising also gives you tons of targeting layers like age, location, recent life events and interests. Plus, it constantly adds new targeting filters and functions that help you reach even more niche prospects who closely meet your customer criteria. Talk about pinpointing a target audience.

Another Facebook real estate ad tool is Website Custom Audiences that lets you create Facebook ads that target users who have visited your website. And several apps specifically for Facebook have emerged. Consider these:

- **Heyo.com:** Helps you host contests, showcase promotions and highlight special offers.
- **Woobox.com:** Lets you easily create quizzes and other fun tools for engaging content.
- **Pagemodo.com:** Helps you make your Facebook business page both sleek and stylish and tabs allow for easy lead capture.

But the latest offering is just as cool. It's called Facebook Live and it lets you stream live video on the internet. I recently wrote about Periscope, another live video streaming app, but when you use Facebook Live you're automatically featured at the top of Facebook users' news feed. What's more, statistics show that live video is viewed more than recorded video.

### **How can REALTORS® use Facebook Live?**

**Open Houses:** Broadcast a walk-through of a new listing and highlight all the great features.

**Webinars:** Host live webinars targeted to buyers and sellers. They can submit questions just like a real-life seminar.

**Real Estate Talk Show:** Offer the latest news in the industry plus share local events and your newest listings. In short, become the Lester Holt or Diane Sawyer of real estate in your town with your own "TV" show!

### **Facebook offers these tips for using Facebook Live:**

**Promote:** Tease upcoming Facebook Live broadcasts for more viewers.

**Plan better:** Take time to plan what you want to do in the video, whether it's a few key talking points or to have a few questions ready ahead of time in a Q&A, in case incoming comments slow down.



**Invest in some equipment:** A shaky live stream turns off viewers so consider a tripod or other stabilizing tools, especially if you're taking viewers on a tour of an open house. And check the shot before going live.

**Get the lighting right:** If you're indoors be sure you have plenty of good lighting and avoid a lot of light directly behind you because it'll wash you out.

**Sound good:** A common mistake for beginners is overlooking sound. Consider an external microphone to make sure your viewers can actually hear you.



And if the live option makes you a little nervous, you can also stream pre-recorded videos. Hey, that has worked like a charm for TV for decades. Some businesses promote their web series to “air” on Facebook Live at a certain time like TV shows. After they are streamed, Facebook Live videos function as normal Facebook videos. Some business owners believe videos may perform better if they begin as live ones.

NowThis, a news company that publishes entirely on social platforms, experimented by streaming a 38-minute compilation of its favorite viral videos via Facebook Live. The stream received over 20,000 views and over 500 comments, according to Facebook's counters.

Yes, all the new-fangled internet tools, apps and options for REALTORS® can be a bit overwhelming. Just take it one step at a time and you'll slowly be right there in the business-winning mix. E-mail me today at [Article@CorcoranCoaching.com](mailto:Article@CorcoranCoaching.com) and I'll send you more free information about how technology can help your real estate business.

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*Keeping  
in Touch-*

## HOW TO STAY IN YOUR CLIENTS' LIVES FOR THE LONG HAUL

One sign of a great real estate agent is their long list of loyal clients following. Part of achieving a great referral base is being a great realtor during the transaction. But, that's only half of the work. To truly be your client's realtor for life and keep them coming back to you as well as referring others to you, you have to stay in their lives past the transaction. Keeping in touch with your past clients can be one of the most important parts of your business, and one that many realtors tend to push to the wayside.

Do you stay in your client's lives, or do you disappear? People refer people that they feel they know well and that they trust, people they consider friends. However, earning and keeping your client's trust involves maintaining a delicate balance with how much you contact them. Experts recommend reaching out to your clients at least quarterly. But, it's not just about how often you stay in touch. You also need to be mindful about how you are reaching out to them. Here are some tips on how to keep in touch with your clients for the long haul:

## INDIVIDUAL PERSONAL CONTACT

One of the best ways to keep in touch with your clients is to simply give them a call every once in a while. Follow up and see how your clients are doing. Offer them assistance if they need it. Personalized contact helps to ensure that you remain as important to your clients long after the sale as you were during the transaction. Giving your clients a call on special occasions such as birthdays or holidays also makes for a great personal touch.

Of course, nothing beats face-to-face contact. Stopping by to say hello can be a great way to keep in contact. An even better way to catch up and maintain that friendship is to set up a lunch or coffee date with past clients. Giving individual clients your undivided attention goes a long way towards maintaining that bond you formed during the transaction and earning your client's loyalty and trust. Interactions like this make a lasting impression on your clients.

Of course, many busy REALTORS® may not have time to follow up with every client one-on-one. A great way to still give personal attention to your clients without meeting each and every one for lunch is to throw a client appreciation party. This allows you to get in some face-to-face time with each client and make sure they all get your undivided attention and quality time to catch up with you, even if it's only for a short time.

Now, if you have a lot of past clients, this can be difficult to manage during one party. One way to get around the numbers problem is to organize smaller events based on client's interests. Instead of throwing one giant party, host a pool party for the families with kids or a wine and cheese get together for single clients. Hosting special events like these ones goes a long way towards keeping your contact with past clients more personalized and setting you apart from those businesses that simply send them a calendar once a year.

## PROVIDE CLIENTS WITH USEFUL NEWS

One way that many REALTORS® keep in touch with their clients is by sending them newsletters. This form of contact can be a double-edged sword. You want to make sure you provide them with useful information that reminds them of your value as a real estate professional. Otherwise your communication will amount to nothing more than spam, and clients will think of you less as a trusted friend and more as a nuisance salesperson.

Clients react much more positively to communication containing information that is pertinent to their lives. Update your clients on what is going on in their local community and

housing market. Demonstrate your knowledge about the community and the things that are important to your clients. Include information about local cultural events, community news, housing statistics, information on the mortgage market, home maintenance advice, home design tips, and anything else that your clients will find personally useful. Your clients will always be interested in value.

## SEND CLIENTS MEMORABLE AND PERSONAL CARDS

Sending your clients cards related to important events in their lives and letting them know that you remember those events and care will go a long way towards building and maintaining a close personal relationship with them. You want to make sure your cards stand out, though. Sending popular holiday cards can be a mistake, as they will most likely get lost amongst all of your clients other holiday cards and will be quickly forgotten. Instead send something more personal such as:

### **HOME ANNIVERSARY CARDS:**

Send cards to each client on the anniversary of the closing of their home.

### **CONGRATULATORY CARDS:**

Remember important events such as wedding anniversaries, graduations, new babies, etc.

### **SPECIAL BIRTHDAY CARDS:**

Instead of just sending your typical birthday card, add something special to yours that will stand out. Include a \$1 scratch off ticket or a \$5 gift certificate to Starbucks. Make sure to include a handwritten personal note.

## GIVE CLIENTS AN UNUSUAL GIFT

Make sure the gifts you send your past clients stand out. Send your past clients an odd gift at the beginning of the year or on a holiday. Think outside the box and send things like funny magnets, customized mugs, a personalized piece of wall décor, and other fun and unusual items. A great way to make your gift stand out even more is to include a funny note with it that will catch their attention as well as make them think of you. For example, one cute idea is to send clients a bag of popcorn with the note, “Real estate is popping, give me a call.” You could send a bag of goldfish with a note attached that says, “I’m fishing for your referrals.” Get creative and have a little fun with it, your clients will notice and remember you for it.

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS



Social networking sites make staying in contact with past clients in a more informal and friendly basis much easier. Connect with your past clients on Facebook. This will help you stay up to date on the important things happening in your past clients' lives. In return, it provides you a great platform for keeping those past clients up to date with what is going on in your business as well as keep in contact in a more informal manner. Use Facebook to remind past clients to check their basement after a heavy rain or that they can contact you for help during tax time.

You can even organize your contacts on Facebook into customized lists such as "past clients," "industry contacts," etc. This will help you better manage your Facebook contacts. This will also allow you to view specific news feeds based on these lists and send messages to a particular list of contacts. Don't forget about the many other social networking sites such as Twitter or LinkedIn either. Utilize this technology to drive personal contact with your clients.

## STAY ORGANIZED

No matter how you choose to keep in contact with past clients, make sure to be consistent. Consistency will help you stay organized and diligent about reaching out to your past clients regularly. A tool used by many real estate professionals to stay organized is a customer relationship management solution. Whether you use one that is online or a computer software program, this will help you stay organized when managing your contacts and allow you to set notifications to alert you when you need to contact certain clients, send out gifts, plan a client appreciation event, and many other things throughout the year.

Staying organized and consistent in your contact with past clients will help you continue to build and manage your referral base, as well as open the door to repeat and referral business.



# Things You Can Do to Anticipate Your Client's Needs

First and foremost, the real estate industry is a customer service business. The key to any successful real estate business is one that can build a reputation by providing an unsurpassed level of care. That usually means a transaction that is seamless and stress-free as possible throughout the whole process. Your client's experience is what keeps them not only coming back, but gets them to recommend you to their friend and family.

The key to creating a great experience is anticipating your client's needs. They are relying on your professionalism and exper-

tise. By showing you can not only anticipate their needs, but have insight into any potential problems that might arise, they will have complete confidence in you. Achieving that level of trust is the key to a transaction that is as stress-free as possible.

## **GET TO KNOW YOUR CLIENTS ON A PERSONAL LEVEL**

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From the moment, you meet a potential client, your goal should be to find out not only what they are looking for as far as their real estate

goals, but who they are as a person. Listening and asking the right questions from the start is one of the most important aspects of the job. You almost have to become an amateur psychologist, really honing in on the emotional reasons behind their real estate transaction.

Taking time upfront not only gives you valuable insight into your client, but it is the first impression your clients have that you truly care about them, and that this isn't just another commission check for you. This goes miles in helping them feel comfortable enough to rely on your guidance.

Knowing who your client is on a deep level will help you navigate the transition ups and downs, allowing you to anticipate the best way to handle it.

## **SPOT POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AND PROVIDE SOLUTIONS**

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Having insight into your client's personality type will come in handy when you anticipate an upcoming snag in the transaction. Most people find the process to be stressful even under the best of circumstances. One of the best rules of thumb is to always provide the solutions to anticipated problems when you present them to the client.

This should be the case even when the problem isn't on you. Anything that can ruin a client's overall experience can reflect poorly on you, whether you deserve it or not. This is a business philosophy called "zero risk". You don't want to take any chances with having an unsatisfied customer.

This is where your experience in the business pays off. You've probably seen most things and can easily anticipate problems that are

likely to delay the process. Remember you are in charge. You are the expert. And, remember, part of avoiding potential problems is making sure your client knows what to expect upfront, always communicate openly and honestly. Telling people what they want to hear and knowing you can't deliver it, is destined to fail, and will always reflect poorly on you.

## **FIND WAYS TO EXCEED EXPECTATIONS**

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Recognizing ways to exceed a customer's needs is just as important as looking out for potential problems, when it comes to creating an exceptional experience. Have a vetted list of trusted service providers. Be hands on. There are Realtors® who are out there helping clients pack, mowing lawns, and picking kids up from school. They are there for a client in ways that are unexpected. Having one thing taken off your plate during a stressful period in your life can feel like a lifesaver and is not soon forgotten. It is those "little" things that will turn a client into a lifelong advocate for your business.

## **TAKE IN FEEDBACK**

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A good service provider is always trying to do better. Many Realtors® have clients fill out surveys after the transaction is over. This serves two purposes. It helps you become better at your job and it shows your clients that you care about them and their opinions. You can also use social media to get feedback via analytics and interactions. All of this information can then be used to create better customer experiences in the future. After all, this is a customer service industry. Treat it like one and you're bound to succeed.

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