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TECHNOLOGY trends

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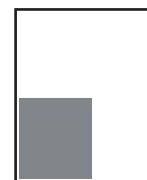
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by Travis Saxton
REAL Trends Technology & Marketing Manager



Go in depth about video and integrations and how these trends impact the real estate space.

Technology changes quickly. That's why it's so important to stay up to date on the trends. The REAL Trends Technology Consulting team researched the top four trends in the business today. We go in depth about video and integrations.

Tech Trend: Video

Most people know that having a solid video campaign is an ideal marketing strategy for real estate professionals. However, an effective video strategy is more than just signing up with a vendor and producing a video for every listing you have.

As brokerages (and your consultants), we need to start using video as a part of a greater strategy. Video is more than an embed code from YouTube or a way to see listing images.

The hidden benefits of video include:

1. More engaged consumers on your website. Video viewers average longer time per page, and you keep them engaged.
2. Better SEO content (Google owns YouTube, and that plays a role in their search algorithms.) Websites with video are 53 times more likely to show up on the first page of Google Search results compared to the same traffic, the same keyword, and two different sites—one with video and one without.
3. Good video makes listing detail pages more interesting and can help frame and sell your properties better.

Of course, video is not perfect so let's look at a few of the drawbacks:

1. YouTube is a solid hosting platform, but a horrible consumption and sharing platform. YouTube has not capitalized on delivering their valuable content. An example is that on your



YouTube page, you could see competitors' ads and completely unrelated videos. They do a poor job of categorizing and organizing content.

2. Integrating video into real estate sites is also not easy. Here are the options:

- Embed YouTube codes, but then you have to update the code manually to make your site relevant and up to date. Plus, you're doing only a few videos at a time.
- Embed a channel (a bit more technical, but not too hard to do), and then you can loop through and play only your videos. This is better but not great, especially if you have multiple topics or messages.

3. Embedding videos on your listing detail pages is nice, but then you are reliant on driving the consumer back to your site to watch the videos. It's far harder to promote these.

There are many real estate-specific video resources. Vscreen, leaders in real estate video development, and BombBomb, personally branded video messages are just two choices. However, nothing solves the issues of delivering great custom video content, organizing video in a fashion that drives traffic to your website and delivering content to your agents' or consumers' inboxes so they may consume your content again on your website. Pairing the consumption and delivery method creates the perfect environment for driving traffic and engaging the consumer.

That's why REAL Trends has created a product called Tagible. Tagible by REAL Trends solves all of these issues. Any brokerage, agent, real estate association or MLS may custom build a branded video library. You show only those videos you want to deliver to your audience. Our new platform has done all of the hard work for you. In seconds, you can have all of your videos still hosted on YouTube and then pulled into your video library.

There are no ads and no unrelated videos. You get only what you want your agents, members or consumers to see. To make this product more valuable, REAL Trends has built a video marketplace where almost all real estate videos reside. Videos from top coaches, industry leaders, technology companies, market reports, mobile apps, education, consumer videos and more. We have built a real estate marketplace to be easily added to your custom video library. Instantly, you have thousands of real estate videos in a format you can actually use.

Take back control of your video experience for your agents and consumers. Here are a few video libraries separated into categories for you to experience this product in action:

Real Estate Associations (click below):

ColoradoRealtors.tagible.com
NMRealtor.tagible.com
NSBAR.tagible.com

Broker Video Libraries (click below):

remaxpros.tagible.com
DicksonRealty.tagible.com

Agent Video Libraries (click below):

weselllouisville.tagible.com
brad-whitehouse-remax.tagible.com



Some of the best marketing companies are setting up their video libraries. Take a look at the NFL and GoPro. Both now feature video libraries on their website.

We have thought about the delivery mechanism in deep detail as well. In a few simple clicks, you can have your custom-branded video newsletter to deliver to consumers and/or agents. Now you can drive traffic back to your video library and complete the cycle to increase your overall business.

You don't even need to produce any video to take advantage of Tagible by REAL Trends. With the vast marketplace, you may pick from the most popular real estate videos, or simply choose the influential people and tech companies you want to disseminate their videos easily, fast and effectively.

Purchase your Tagible by REAL Trends account today.

Tech Trend: Integrations

As our technology consulting team visits with brokers across the country, we see far too many instances of system overload. The average brokerage is running with 10 to 15 technology programs. We wonder why agent adoption is so poor in our industry? Agents can't remember the passwords to all of these systems, plus who has the time to manage and maintain them?

Here is what we advise. Besides your email platform, you should strive to accomplish everything with a maximum of three technology systems. This includes your: website, CRM, email marketing, transaction management, Intranet, internal communications, mobile tools, CMA and document storage.

With the growth of single sign-on (SSO) and the prevalence of API's (Application Program Interfaces), there should be no need to have more

than three systems. Ideally, with these two technology strategies, you can have one place for your agents to conduct their work.

Let's take a deeper look, starting with single sign-on. This strategy allows your users to login from one technology platform to another. Thus, you can create a hub and spoke model. All of your agents go to one place to login for everything. Agents can still work in multiple systems and navigate quickly and easily from the main hub.

The next strategy is using an API, which is more complex than a single sign-on system. Many companies are opening up their APIs so that data can flow from one system to another. A good API integration could have your CRM completely talking with a separate transaction management system, and your agents would never need to leave the CRM. The API route is costly. You can pay anywhere from \$1,000 to \$10,000 for an API integration from one system to another. In the end, this is the ideal route. The trick is that both parties need to play in a friendly way and allow their APIs to be open (Not all players are like this, and some are selective). Our industry is moving to a more open and friendly approach.

The bottom-line is this: There is not one vendor that excels at every real estate technology no matter what anybody tells you. Many have great pieces. Some have multiple great pieces. Sometimes a fully integrated system with a few of the pieces that are less than great is better than adding separate technology strategies, even if those other pieces are better. Something will be left out when it comes to your agent adoption. ●

*** Need more information on technology trends and how to make them work for your brokerage? Give us a call at 303-741-1000. This article originally appears in the November 2014 issue of the REAL Trends Newsletter and is reprinted with permission of REAL Trends Inc. Copyright 2014**



Here's to Happy
and SAFE
Holidays!

By: Bubba Mills

THE HEADLINES ARE SHOCKING!

**"Armed Men Rob
Real Estate Agent at Gun Point"**

**"Philadelphia Police Arrest Two
in Carjacking of Realtor®"**

**"Real Estate Agent Found Dead,
Buried in Shallow Grave"**

That last headline recounts the story of Arkansas Realtor Beverly Carter, who was murdered in September, the National Association of Realtors' "Realtor® Safety Month."

You should never have to pay with your life to work. Yet, in real estate it happens regularly. Horrid headlines appear on the front page and we all just shake our heads and say how horrific it is.

The only silver lining is we can learn from these tragic stories and possibly prevent them from happening again. With that in mind, I'd like to share some safety tips you can use in common situations that have been gleaned from police and personal safety experts.

WHEN MEETING WITH A CLIENT FOR THE FIRST TIME

- Don't be a 'pop-up' Realtor®. By that I mean don't just pop-up immediately when a prospective client says they want to see a house. Meet at the office first to learn more about them -- ask for their identification and have them complete a customer identification form. Also, introduce all prospective clients to a coworker. Criminals won't like this.

WHEN SHOWING A PROPERTY

- Use the buddy system. Those who know me; know I'm a faithful Boy Scout. One of our best safety tips is to never leave the campsite alone. The same goes for showing homes. There's always strength (and safety) in numbers. Let others know where you are. Also, avoid confined spaces like basements and attics where you can become trapped. When showing rooms, stay by the door. Follow behind prospective buyers when walking through the home. And, if you feel uncomfortable, always have an excuse to leave the house: say you need to meet another agent who's coming with more buyers, for example.

WHEN HOLDING AN OPEN HOUSE

- Again, buddy up. Would-be assailants are less likely to enter when they see two people. And inspect homes when you enter, pick escape routes and ensure your cell phone has a connection. Also, let neighbors know you're showing the house.

WHEN ENTERING FORECLOSED OR VACANT HOMES

- Inspect the exterior. Visit during daylight hours only. Walk around the house before going in and check for shattered windows or busted doors. If a squatter is in the home, leave immediately and call police.

Transporting prospects in your car

- Consider driving separately. Let clients follow you from listing to listing. If you absolutely have to take one car, then you drive and park where you can leave quickly -- on the street or curb.

Experts say Realtor® security and safety comes in layers -- doing a lot of little things adds extra layers of safety -- such as using buddy systems, being aware of your surroundings, holding first meetings in your office, etc.

Also, consider taking personal safety classes. One I recommend is P.A.R.T. (Professional Assault Response Training). It's offered around the country and teaches basic self-defense techniques.

I'll end by sharing this good news: NAR's 2015 president, Chris Polychron, has pledged to make safety a top priority.

"The sad part is that when you work in real estate, it does involve risk," Polychron is quoted in The Washington Post. "But as an industry we have got to promote better safety awareness."

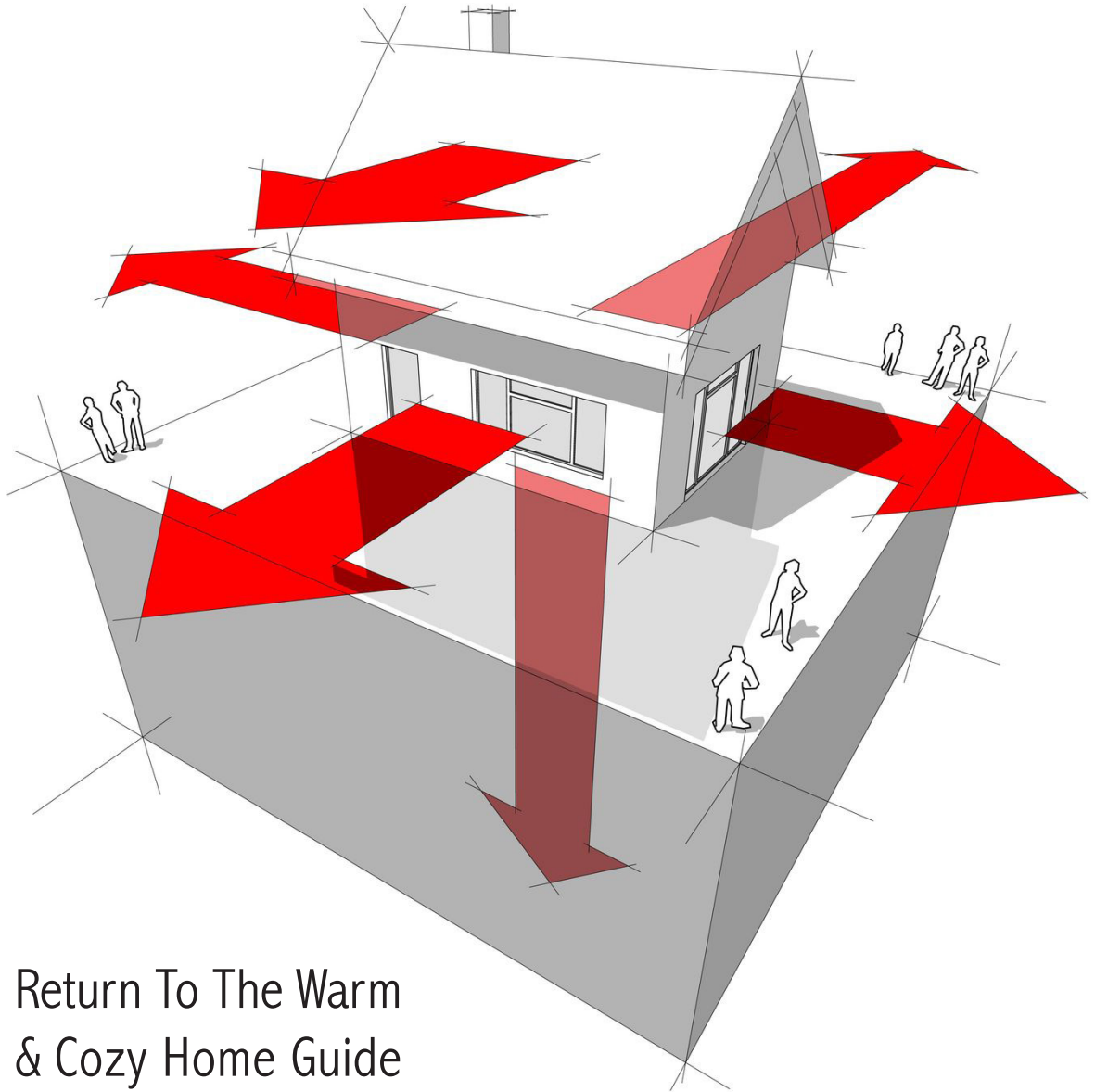
I couldn't agree more.

Let me hear from you. Are you practicing the profession as safely as you can? Have you taken a personal self-defense class? Do you have more safety tips to pass along? Please send any comments or questions you have to Article@CorcoranCoaching.com or <http://www.facebook.com/CorcoranCoaching>.

 *Bubba Mills is executive vice president of Corcoran Consulting and Coaching Inc. (www.corcorancoaching.com/programs, 800-957-8353), an international consulting and coaching company that specializes in performance coaching and the implementation of sound business systems into Real Estate Companies, Mortgage Companies and Small Businesses. Corcoran Consulting & Coaching has a Life Coaching Division called Genesis; which is based on the core fundamentals of Og Mandino's Performance Coaching and Intentional Creation Coaching. Corcoran Consulting is headed by Bob Corcoran; a national recognized leader, speaker and author. To find out more about Corcoran Consulting & Coaching, call 1-800-957-8353 or visit us at www.CorcoranCoaching.com/about-corcoran-coaching.*

8

EASY WAYS TO SEAL AIR LEAKS AROUND THE HOUSE



Return To The Warm & Cozy Home Guide

By: Jeanne Huber, Houselogic.com

For what the typical family wastes every year on air leaks — about \$350 — you can plug energy-robbing gaps, start saving money, and enjoy a more comfortable home.

A typical family spends about a third of its annual heating and cooling budget — roughly \$350 — on air that leaks into or out of the house through unintended gaps and cracks. With the money you waste in just one year, you can plug many of those leaks yourself. It's among the most cost-effective things you can do to conserve energy and increase comfort, according to Energy Star.

Start in the attic, since that's where you'll find some of the biggest energy drains. Then tackle the basement to prevent cold air that enters there from being sucked into upstairs rooms. Finally, seal air leaks in the rest of the house. Here are eight places to start.

1. INSULATE AROUND RECESSED LIGHTS

Most recessed lights have vents that open into the attic, a direct route for heated or cooled air to escape. When you consider that many homes have 30 or 40 of these fixtures, it's easy to see why researchers at the Pennsylvania Housing Research/Resource Center pinpointed them as a leading cause of household air leaks. Lights labeled ICAT, for "insulation contact and air tight," are already sealed; look for the label next to the bulb. If you don't see it, assume yours leaks. An airtight baffle (\$8 to \$30) is a quick fix. Remove the bulb, push the baffle up into the housing, then replace the bulb.

2. PLUG OPEN STUD CAVITIES

Most of your house probably has an inner skin of drywall or plaster between living space and unheated areas. But builders in the past often skipped this cover behind knee walls (partial-height walls where the roof angles down into the top floor), above dropped ceilings or soffits, and above angled ceilings over stairs.

Up in the attic, you may need to push insulation away to see if the stud cavities are open. If they are, seal them with unfaced fiberglass insulation (less than \$1 a square foot) stuffed into plastic garbage bags; the bag is key to blocking airflow. Close large gaps with scraps of drywall or pieces of reflective foil insulation (less than \$2 a square foot). Once you've covered the openings, smooth the insulation back into place. To see these repairs in action, consult Energy Star's DIY guide to air sealing.

3. CLOSE GAPS AROUND FLUES AND CHIMNEYS

Building codes require that wood framing be kept at least 1 inch from metal flues and 2 inches from brick chimneys. But that creates gaps where air can flow through. Cover the gaps with aluminum flashing (\$12) cut to fit and sealed into place with high-temperature silicone caulk (\$14). To keep insulation away from the hot flue pipe, form a barrier by wrapping a cylinder of flashing around the flue, leaving a 1-inch space in between. To maintain the spacing, cut and bend a series of inch-deep tabs in the cylinder's top and bottom edges.

4. WEATHERSTRIP THE ATTIC ACCESS DOOR

A 1/4-inch gap around pull-down attic stairs or an attic hatch lets through the same amount of air as a bedroom's heating duct. Seal it by caulking between the stair frame and the rough opening, or by installing foam weatherstripping around the perimeter of the hatch opening. Or you can buy a pre-insulated hatch cover kit for stairs (\$150) or doors (\$350 and up).

5. SQUIRT FOAM IN MEDIUM-SIZE GAPS

Once the biggest attic gaps are plugged, move on to the medium-size ones. Low-expansion polyurethane foam in a can is great for plugging openings 1/4-inch to 3 inches wide, such as those around plumbing pipes and vents. A standard 12-ounce can (\$5) is good for 250 feet of bead about 1/2-inch thick. The plastic straw applicator seals shut within two hours of the first use, so to get the most mileage out of a can, squirt a lubricant such as WD-40 onto a pipe cleaner and stuff that into the applicator tube between uses.

6. CAULK SKINNY GAPS

Caulk makes the best gap-filler for openings less than 1/4-inch wide, such as those cut around electrical boxes. Silicone costs the most (\$8 a tube) but works better next to nonporous materials, such as metal flashing, or where there are temperature extremes, as in attics. Acrylic latex caulk (\$2 a tube) is less messy to work with and cleans up with water.

“Building codes require that wood framing be kept at least 1 inch from metal flues and 2 inches from brick chimneys. But that creates gaps where air can flow through.”

7. PLUG GAPS IN THE BASEMENT

Gaps low on a foundation wall matter if you're trying to fix a wet basement, but only those above the outside soil level let air in. Seal those with the same materials you'd use in an attic: caulk for gaps up to 1/4-inch wide and spray foam for wider ones. Use high-temperature caulk around vent pipes that get hot, such as those for the furnace or water heater. Shoot foam around wider holes for wires, pipes, and ducts that pass through basement walls to the outside.

In most older houses with basements, air seeps in where the house framing sits on the foundation. Spread a bead of caulk between the foundation and the sill plate (the wood immediately above the foundation), and along the top and bottom edges of the rim joist (the piece that sits atop the sill plate).

8. TIGHTEN UP AROUND WINDOWS AND DOORS

In the main living areas of your home, the most significant drafts tend to occur around windows and doors. If you have old windows, caulking and adding new weatherstripping goes a long way toward tightening them up. Bronze weatherstripping (\$15 to \$35 for 17 feet)

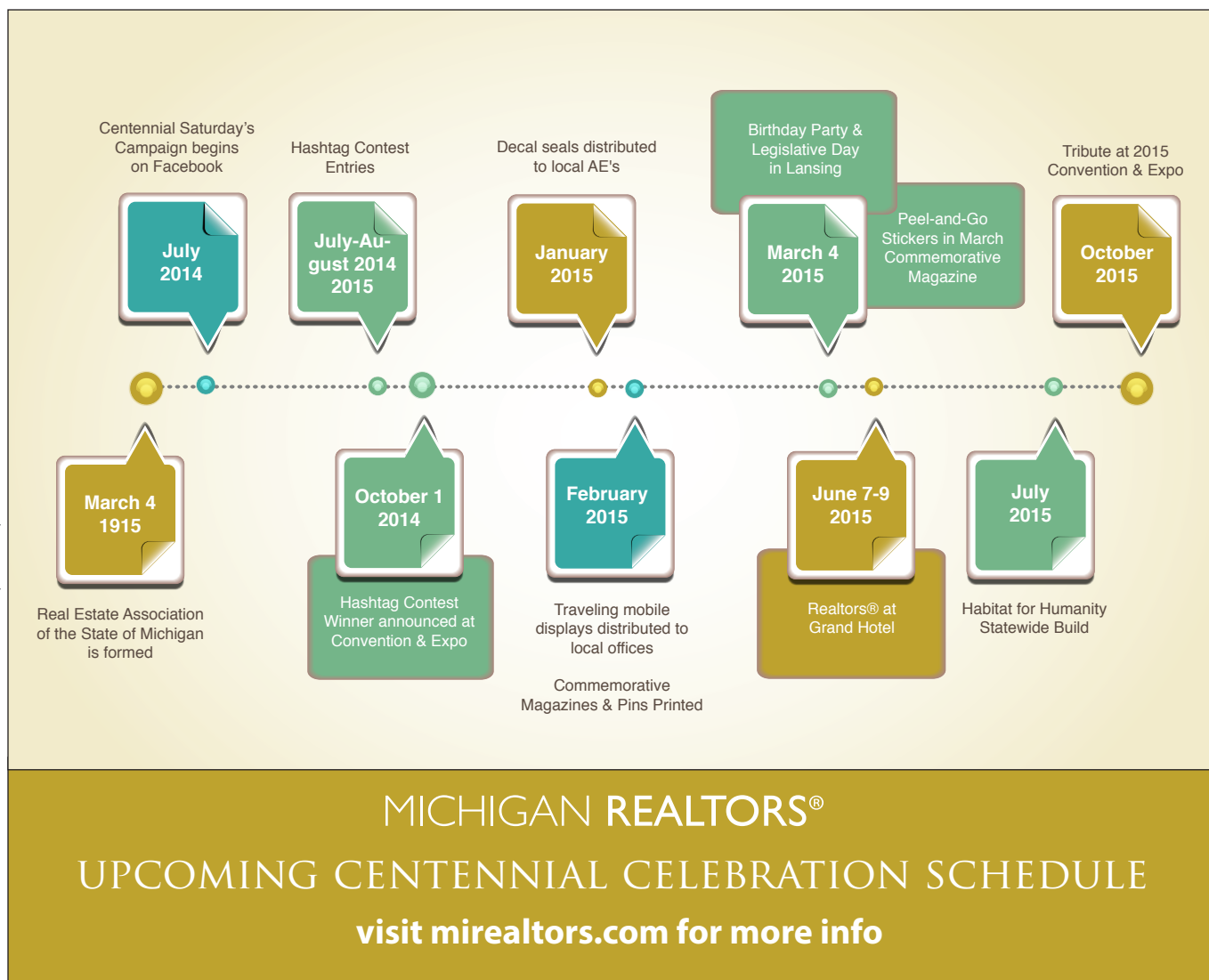
lasts for decades but is time-consuming to install, while some self-stick plastic types are easy to put on but don't last very long. Adhesive-backed EPDM rubber (\$8 for 10 feet) is a good compromise, rated to last at least 10 years. Nifty gadgets called pulley seals (\$9 a pair) block air from streaming through the holes where cords disappear into the frames.

Weatherstripping also works wonders on doors. If a draft comes in at the bottom, install a new door sweep (\$9).

BEFORE WORKING IN THE ATTIC, TAKE SOME PRECAUTIONS

Try to do attic work on a cool day. Wear protective gear: disposable clothes, gloves, and a double-elastic mask or half-face respirator. Bring along a droplight, plus at least two pieces of plywood big enough to span two or three joists to support you as you work. To save trips up and down a ladder, try to move up all of the materials you need before you get started.

One warning: If you find vermiculite insulation, hold off until you've had it checked for asbestos; your health department or air-quality agency can recommend a lab. ●





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How to Boost your Business with the Bustling *Foreign Market*

By: Bob Corcoran



Let me start with an important question: are you missing out on a consumer segment that could boost your real estate business?

If you're not looking at foreign home buyers (those looking to move here or recent immigrants), you might be missing out big time. That's because sales to foreign consumers in the United States are sky-rocketing. A new report from the National Association of Realtors (NAR) has found that from 2013 to 2014,

home sales to foreign buyers saw a whopping 35 percent jump from \$68.2 billion to \$92.2 billion. That's a full 7 percent of the \$1.2 trillion existing-home sales marketplace.

Could you use a 7 percent increase in your business? You might be able to achieve it in the foreign market. There's clearly room for more agents. NAR says just 28 percent of agents they surveyed reported working with buyers from other countries.



HERE'S WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THIS BURGEONING MARKET:

- **Know where they're coming from.** NAR reports the five countries most buyers come from are: Canada, China, Mexico, India and the United Kingdom. Canada accounts for the largest share of clients, but China is the fastest growing source of clients, now accounting for 16 percent, up from 9 percent since 2007.

- **Know how they connect with real estate professionals.** NAR says of agents who work with foreigners, 59 percent reported that clients were referred to them through friends, previous clients, and international and domestic referrals. About 19 percent of clients came through website or online listings. The primary sources of online leads were the agent's own website (24 percent), the local MLS website

(16 percent), and other aggregators (17 percent). Realtor.com, which launched an international site (www.realtor.com/international) in 2011, accounted for 6 percent of online leads.

- **Know what they're seeking.** Most homes purchased by foreign buyers, about 42 percent, are used as a primary residence. Non-resident foreigners are limited to six-month stays in the U.S., so these buyers largely use the property for vacation or rental purposes or as an investment. Roughly 65 percent of purchases involved a single-family home. Nearly half of international clients preferred properties in a suburban area, about a quarter preferred a central city or urban area, and about 13 percent chose to buy in a resort area. Location appears to be the primary factor affecting residential home purchases, depending on the buyer's employment, vacation preferences, family, educational and investment objectives.

- **Know where to go from here.** NAR can help with specific international professional development opportunities including the Commercial & Global Services Group and the Certified International Property Specialist (CIPS) designation. Visit www.realtor.org/global for more information. ●

Let me hear from you. Is your market big enough now to help you reach your goals? If not, what opportunities exist in your farm area to expand your market? What can you start doing today to improve and grow your business? Please send any comments or questions you have to Article@CorcoranCoaching.com or <http://www.facebook.com/CorcoranCoaching>.

* *Bob Corcoran is CEO of Corcoran Consulting and Coaching Inc. (www.corcorancoaching.com/programs, 800-957-8353), an international consulting and coaching company that specializes in performance coaching and the implementation of sound business systems into Real Estate Companies, Mortgage Companies and Small Businesses. Corcoran Consulting & Coaching has a Life Coaching Division called Genesis; which is based on the core fundamentals of Og Mandino's Performance Coaching and Intentional Creation Coaching. Corcoran Consulting is headed by Bob Corcoran; a national recognized leader, speaker and author. To find out more about Corcoran Consulting & Coaching, call 1-800-957-8353 or visit us at www.CorcoranCoaching.com/about-corcoran-coaching.*

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**Michigan Realtors®
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June 7 - 9 | Mackinac Island

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Detroit Marriott
at the Renaissance Center

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CYCLICAL CHANGE

By: Larry Kendall, chairman emeritus of
The Group, Inc. and author of “Ninja Selling”

ARE YOU A CHANGE LEADER?

Read on to find out how to recognize the four types of change.

The ability to anticipate and manage change is a critical leadership skill. The first step in being a change leader is recognizing the four types of change: Cyclical; Structural; Exponential and Incremental. In this article, we'll focus on cyclical change and how to predict and benefit from market cycles.

We are in a cyclical industry. Knowing where we are in the market cycle is a critical skill. Real estate market cycles tend to be long, slow and predictable (when we watch the fundamentals). I teach market cycles in the College of Business at Colorado State University. Here are four fundamentals you can use to predict market cycles:

- **Jobs.** Employment is a leading indicator of a real estate market cycle by 12 to 18 months. This is your earliest warning signal of a change. Contact your state employment office and join the mailing list to receive the monthly employment numbers for your county. Watch for a change in employment (either up or down). This is your best crystal ball, giving you a 12- to 18-month head start.
- **FHFA.Gov.** Go to this government website and download their quarterly “House Price Index” report. This is a long report (usually 75 pages) so scroll down to the charts that give you “House Price Appreciation by State” and 300 individual metropolitan markets. These charts show the house price appreciation for the last year, the last quarter, the last five years and since 1991. Want to see if the market is speeding up or slowing down? Take the quarterly change in prices for the market and annualize it (multiply x 4). Then, compare this number to the annual price change. Here's an example using the June 30, 2014 report:

Nevada led the nation with a 14.80 percent price increase for the last year. However, their increase in the last quarter was only 0.87 percent. Annualize this last quarter (multiply x 4) and we get 3.48 percent, indicating that this market is slowing down. On the other hand, Massachusetts with a 4.95 percent, one-year appreciation and a 2.5 percent quarterly appreciation (10 percent an-

nualized) is a market that is speeding up. Some markets are seasonal, so be careful about jumping to conclusions based on just one quarter. Start tracking each quarter, and you will spot the trends.

- **Affordability.** The three components of affordability are house price, household income and interest rates. Because of the low interest rates, most markets are more affordable today than they were 10 years ago—even with rising home prices. Ultimately, home prices and real estate activity is a function of people's ability to pay. The funny money, subprime lending was an aberration that was not sustainable and contributed to the housing bubble.

- **Investment Ratios.** Tracking supply, demand, rents and the relationship of rents to prices will also give you a clue as to whether a market is overheated, and a bubble is building. Markets tend to seek equilibrium over time and develop historic ratios. If a market gets out of sync with these historic ratios, watch out. Unless there has been a structural change, (which we will discuss next month) a change is on the horizon.

Tracking these four fundamentals will help you get in front of the inevitable. Unfortunately, some real estate leaders ignore these fundamentals when they succumb to media hype or the euphoria of a hot market. Fearless and disciplined leadership is required in order to assess and exploit the change.

Right before the bubble burst, leading to the great recession, two of my wealthy real estate friends (who are masters of using these four fundamentals to predict market cycles) put all of their real estate on the market for sale. One of them owned over one million square feet of commercial property, and it was all free and clear. They had spent years building these portfolios. They were “real estate people.” So, I asked them what they were going to do once they sold all of their real estate. “We'll wait and buy it all back from the banks at 50 cents on the dollar,” they said. And they did! They got in front of the inevitable. ●

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