

A 7-Step Prospecting Plan

TIP: One response in 25 is a 4 percent response rate.

1. Set a goal.

Experts say you get one lead for every 25 contacts you make. Decide how much business you want to do—either volume, income, or number of transactions—and work backwards to determine how many people you must talk to each month.

TIP: Be sure the target market you select is large enough to meet your income goals. Also remember that you aren't the only real estate salesperson in your market and won't get all the business.

2. Get a regular schedule for prospecting.

Sales guru Jim Pugliese of Jim Pugliese Seminars, Guilderland, N.Y., says you should spend a minimum of one or two hours a day prospecting. Plan your time in terms of how many people you want to speak to each day. You can easily prospect 20 to 25 people an hour in person.

3. Decide whom you want to target.

Keep It Ethical

Never direct specific solicitations to prospects who have exclusively listed their property with another company while the listing is in force. —*Standards of Practice 16-2, 16-3*

Targeting can be by neighborhood, by market niche, or by price range.

4. Decide the best method and the best time to reach people.

Weekends are often the best time for prospecting because many people are off from work. Never reach out at dinnertime. Sales trainer Walter Sanford, Sanford Systems, Long Beach, Calif., favors 7:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. during the week and 10:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

5. Determine your approach.

Ask directly about an interest in selling, or ask some more indirect questions to assess interest first. Try each approach to see what works best for the potential clients in your market.

TIP: Sales guru Jim Pugliese says never let that pipeline go dry. If you stop prospecting when you're busy, you'll have no deals to turn to when things slow down. And they *will* slow down.

6. Track your efforts.

Use a system to track success. Look for patterns: Which niches are most responsive? What time of day works best? How does your success rate compare to the norm for your area? Adapt your program accordingly.

7. Do it every day.

No excuses, no exceptions.