

The secret of his success...

John Foltz truly exemplifies his motto, "success is a by-product of helping others succeed." Serving as president of Realty Executives of Phoenix, Arizona, he has supervised nearly 1,300 sales executives. With an open mind and positive outlook, Foltz strives to empower and inspire other REALTORS®. He frequently speaks and writes on hot REALTOR® topics and concerns and recently answered some questions for the Michigan REALTOR®.

What characteristics make a good REALTOR®?

A good REALTOR® is a person who will take the time to see the nobility of the profession and commit to delivering value to his/her clients. We are here to help people meet their needs and realize their dreams—providing a place to raise their families, spend time with friends, celebrate weddings and grieve after funerals. It is a noble profession, worthy of passion and commitment.

A good REALTOR® is a person who is willing to take the time to build a business rather than live from transaction to transaction. This means developing relationships through a continuous and repetitious communication process, allowing people to see the reliability and trustworthiness of his/her efforts and motives. This will become the base for a continuous source of high quality leads and referrals.

A good REALTOR® spends both time and money to wisely grow their business, based on a well-conceived business/marketing plan, while consistently spending less than he/she makes (a budget) so as to be able to survive the "rainy days" in the marketplace like those we are experiencing right now. He or she also implements marketing plans catered to each individual client's needs for maximum results.

And a good REALTOR® is one who is intimately familiar with the market; someone who invests in real estate themselves.

So, the motivation to honestly contribute value to others' lives, the sense to build a business as a business, utilizing strong marketing skills, and the participation in the real estate market on a personal level are what I believe make a good REALTOR®.

What realistic expectations can a new REALTOR® have during their first few years in the business?

A new REALTOR® can expect those who have learned to trust him or her in the past to trust them again. They can expect that so long as they deliver their sincere and trustworthy effort, they will be rewarded with the business and referrals of their current friends and colleagues.

A new REALTOR® can expect to feel a little awkward at first in approaching old acquaintances and friends, but must realize that he or she is there to offer the gift of their services to the potential client.

A new REALTOR® can expect to be called a "newbie" or put down by more experienced REALTORS® who might feel insecure; or they can be lifted up and mentored by those truly great REALTORS® who live in a world of abundance. There is always room at the top!

What advice can you give new REALTORS® entering a tough market?

Recognize your unique character, innate abilities and strengths, and put that forward as a potential gift to all you meet in offering your service.

Learn, adopt, and live the REALTOR® Code of Ethics.

Join a brokerage that has a reputation you can be proud of—one that lifts your own sense of self esteem—and will be seen favorably in the eyes of your potential clients. You are, and will become, like those with whom you associate.

Take the time to build your business one relationship at a time; and ensure you have adequate financial survival power to withstand, at least, a six-month start-up period.

Establish a relationship with more experienced and successful REAL-

TORS®, whom you admire, and with whom you can learn and grow. They will be helped by your enthusiasm as well.

Adopt a marketing system or process that will ultimately produce a continuous flow of high quality leads, like a customer relationship management (CRM) system.

Establish a budget & business/marketing plan to spend money wisely; and, track the results of your expenditures—spending more on what works and cutting or decreasing money or energy spent on those items or activities which are not yielding favorable results.

What advice can you offer veteran REALTORS® who might be questioning their career path in real estate?

Pretend you are beginning anew. Revisit all the points mentioned above for a new REALTOR®. Then continually count your blessings and celebrate even small successes.

Change your daily routine, adding some new and interesting activities to increase your productivity, something you haven't tried before. And make time for yourself on your schedule. Schedule personal/family time, as well as business tasks, for a more balanced life.

Take the time to write a personal note to each person who has contributed to your past successes. Let them know you are enjoying success, could not have done it without them, and are writing to simply say "thank you."

Hang out with some new and more energetic REALTORS®, and approach the profession with a renewed vigor—knowing you can make a great contribution to everyone who entrusts their business to you.

What has been your best career decision? Anything you regret?



My best career decision has been to sustain a positive attitude, surround myself with other positive people, and establish and live by the philosophy that “Success is a by-product of helping others.” I have chosen to believe the first law of the Universe: You get what you give. And, I have enjoyed abundant success, both professionally and personally, as a result.

You have been quoted as saying, “Success is a by-product of helping others succeed.” Why is it important for REALTORS® to help each other in their careers?

It has been said that the best way to learn something is to teach it. And perhaps the best way to establish productive behaviors is to coach others or encourage others to adopt successful behaviors.

It is also true that successful and positive people tend to stick together. There is a multiplication factor that happens in your life and your career when you experience this kind of synergy.

And, finally, your name is all you have. It can represent leadership, giving, and support of noble goals or quite the contrary. While it may take time for those around you to realize you are a giver and return the favor; the return is an ultimate certainty!

Can you give an example of how helping someone has led you to success?

Yes. I was on my way to a meeting in a coffee shop at the local mall early one morning. In the nearly empty parking lot, I saw a woman struggling to get a box out of her trunk. I walked over to help her, carried the box into the building for her, and, on the way learned it was part of what her daughter had cleaned out of the closet while preparing her house for sale. I scheduled an appointment later that day and listed the property. Over the years, I have received many referrals from this family.

I had a conversation with a REALTOR® who was struggling to keep a listing that had not sold and was about to expire. I took the time that day to brainstorm new marketing ideas and script thoughts about pricing the property to help the REALTOR® extend the listing. It worked! The listing was extended, and I have a fan who helps spread the word about cooperating with others in the business who are willing to help.

Are you discouraged by the current economy? Why or why not?

No. This is a part of the normal cycle in the American Capitalistic System. The real estate markets, in regular repeating cycles, go from over supply to under supply to over demand to under demand. Each phase of the cycle has its own opportunities. We are not being punished, and the market is not “bad.” It is just a normal part of the historic cycles that have been a part of our economy for generations.

This market cycle prompts fear and anxiety from most clients; but it is a market of opportunity. The REALTOR’S® quiet and informed voice of reality and steadiness promotes confidence and lays the foundation for building long-term relationships. These relationships will pay off in the “sweet spot” of the real estate cycle, which might be a year or more out, but will come for certain.

Should REALTORS® change their sales approach in today’s economy? How?

REALTORS® should not change what is working. If, however, what they are doing is not working, this is an ideal time to establish relationships based on the offering of trustworthiness and informed counsel. Whether that results in business today or not, it will ultimately build the base for a business that grows over time.

This means that some REALTORS® might wish to reduce their emphasis on property and increase their emphasis on people.

What should REALTORS® do about the large inventory currently flooding the market?

Speak with both Buyers and Sellers about reality in an informative way without contributing to their fears. You didn’t make this market; but, you are here to help them navigate the perceived “troubled waters”. Consider yourself the voice of reason and reliability. You can be a gift that is never forgotten.

Naturally, any properties offered for sale must be white glove sharp and aggressively priced to compete. Now is not the time to invest in the “maybe” Sellers. Help those who are motivated and leave the rest for a later time...a different market. You will only frustrate yourself and your unmotivated Seller by holding an over-priced listing for a year or more.

What do you think the future of real estate looks like on a national level?

The future of real estate will most likely be a reflection of the past. The markets are bigger than before ... even global...thanks to the Internet. And, marketing techniques involve considerably more technology than before. But the fundamentals are still the same: Clients want to accomplish their goal through someone they feel they can trust and depend on to be there for them.

The market will cycle in the coming years as it has in the past. We will experience a stabilizing time, a beginning of new growth, the “sweet spot” of accelerated growth, and the inevitable adjustment after the market goes to excesses as it has always done. This is like birth, growth, maturity, and atrophy, resulting in new growth. Not to worry, historical patterns are powerful. Our task is to recognize the opportunity and be of service to our clients. You will build lasting relationships that will payoff in the long run.

What part can REALTORS® play in turning around economic conditions?

Show up. Be positive. Be informed. Be gracefully truthful with your clients. Be service conscious. Represent yourself and your clients with pride. Live the life of abundance, and don’t dwell in the world of scarcity. It is mental, and it is contagious.

Any additional comments?

Responding to these questions has reminded me why I have remained in real estate for more than 40 years...Success truly is a by-product of helping others.

In closing, Michelangelo, perhaps one of the greatest sculptors of all time, is quoted as saying something like this, “Every block of stone has a masterpiece inside it, and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it.”

I propose to you, “Every person has within themselves a masterpiece waiting to be discovered, revealed, and released.”

I encourage every REALTOR® to get in touch with his/her gifts. Methodically offer yourself and your gifts in service to others as a part of this noble profession, and you will achieve more than you could have ever dreamed!



The views expressed in this interview do not necessarily represent the views of the Michigan Association of REALTORS®. If there is a top REALTOR® you would like interviewed, write to ccostello@mirealtors.com.