

when
the going
gets



TOUGH.



Want professional advice from a seasoned REALTOR® that has expertise in hot and cold markets and whose company currently has annual sales in excess of \$2.2 billion? She possess over 35 years of experience in the business and her company is ranked number one for sales volume by the Houston Association of REALTORS®.

Marilyn Eiland of Prudential Gary Greene REALTORS® offers Michigan REALTORS® advice on dealing with tough times, technology and ethics.

What has been the biggest challenge in your real estate career and how did you resolve or overcome the challenge?

I have been through lots of market ups and downs in my 35 years in real estate. A changing market is the biggest challenge because you have to keep the agents' morale up when it is going down and you have to keep them focused on keeping up with their prospecting list when it is too easy to keep busy.

What is something you cannot live without in your professional life and why?

No doubt about it, email has become as essential as the telephone!

What fundamental tools should every REALTOR® have?

The basics are, of course, a nice car, a cell phone, a PDA, and a laptop. I think the word 'tools' should also include a source for statistical market information; a well thought out and memorized listing proposal, and a web site.

How do you remain ethical in such a competitive profession? Have your ethics ever been tested and how?

I never thought of ethics as something that would be tougher in a competitive profession.

One's ethics are what they are. You do the right thing when your clients, agents,

and other Realtors are involved... period. I hope all one thousand of our agents feel the same way.

How do you mentor rookie REALTORS®?

Our Fast Start training program is six modules long and meets every Thursday and Friday. We feel this gives the Rookie a chance to absorb the information and discuss it in their office before the next topic is introduced. A Career Development Manager who is in that branch specifically to work with the new agents does our mentoring in most of our offices.

How do you encourage others to be involved in their communities?

I suppose we encourage our agents by example. We have a lot of visibility in various charities and community functions. We support their efforts to get involved financially and with our marketing department.

What effective marketing tools have you utilized and why have they worked for you?

Our web site has generated the most 'new' business for us over the last years. We have two full time people who distribute the leads to our agents. It works for the obvious reason that everyone is on the web doing their research before they go out with a Realtor. We believe in speed to the lead and we know if we can contact the web inquiry first, we have the best chance of sell-

ing them a house. If Houston did not have such a powerful competing web site (HAR.com), we would have a lot more web business.

Do you have any advice for making a real estate company thrive in a tough market?

Sure! I'm full of advice. Stick to your corporate culture. Don't try to change to a different model, or even worse to every model, to keep agents. Use the softer market to gain on your competition. Their agents are looking for someone to get them through the tough times. Also, get all the listings that you can. Yard signs are the most economical advertising there is. Hold open houses and be out there. If the pie is smaller, you must get more of it.

Any other additional thoughts/comments?

As long as the brokerage treasures their agents and gives them the support they need, a tough market can be a very healthy thing.

For more information on Marilyn or her company, which she runs with her brother Mark Woodroof, visit Prudential Gary Green's Web site at www.garygreene.com. **MAR**



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.