

TOP PRODUCER COACHING & TRAINING

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Happy Holidays to one and all. Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Christmas, or some other occasion, I hope that this time finds you well and happy.

Often, this is a slow time for REALTOR's as their clients pay attention to other pressing family concerns. Why not schedule time now to map out how you might reconnect with past clients in the New Year. Unless you have been exceptionally good this past year, there are a number of former clients who may have been forgotten. Pulling them back into your fold during 2010 would be useful process.

If you have not been paying attention to www.topproducer.com/campus , I suggest that you take a peek in the near future. There will be a number of surprises in store for you this holiday season, to include Holiday Marketing ideas.

Should you require specialized help with TOP PRODUCER 8i, don't forget that while we are in Florida I offer remote training using GoToMeeting software, good for both individuals and small teams. Without travel costs, this permits short, intensive sessions, which give you time to implement features discussed in an earlier session prior to another. Give me a call at 410-790-4422 if you are interested in customized training.

Dwight

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Check www.DwightKitchens.com for the latest details.

Please forward a copy of this newsletter to friends using TOP PRODUCER 8i.

Table of Contents:

1. An Hour At A Time
2. Dragon Naturally Speaking 10.1
3. Windows 7 recommendation
4. non-TOP PRODUCER 8i backup alternatives
5. Create a keyboard shortcut to power off your monitor

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1. An Hour At A Time

Yes, we each have only 24 hours per day. No argument there. How we make use of that time is another issue.

Why not see what you can do by better organizing your time in one hour increments? Break your tasks down into smaller increments and review your entire database before the beginning of the year.

- a. Use the search function to divide your database alphabetically (A, B, C, etc.)
Use Mass Open to screen each record for appropriate Contact Types - change as appropriate
- b. Open the Action Plans you use, drilling down to insure that they contain the appropriate messages for your clients - change as appropriate
Revise materials which are out-of-date (to be used in future applications of the plans)
Consider changing from letters to e-mails sent automatically to lessen your marketing burden
- c. If you add new Contact Types to Contact Records, consider whether adding an Action Plan for that Contact Type is appropriate.
- d. Break the tasks you need to perform into smaller increments, and start working down your list.

Many tasks appear overwhelming until broken down into smaller pieces. As we approach 2010, consider setting up your database now to provide you with a more useful system for the future.

2. Dragon Naturally Speaking 10.1

If you have not tried speech recognition software previously, now might be the time to give it a spin. The latest release of Dragon Naturally Speaking 10.1 is designed to accommodate Windows 7. If you are still on an earlier version of the Windows operating system, you might find an older, less expensive version, elsewhere, such as at www.tigerdirect.com . Under either circumstances, if you are constantly writing individual letters and e-mails rather than using ones from your library, this should be most useful. Put your cursor within TOP PRODUCER 8i, click on a Dragon Naturally Speaking icon, and start talking into a supplied headset. Your words flow onto the screen. While you may need to correct a few errors in translation, it outpaces most user's typing skills. Check out the developer's web-site at www.Nuance.com.

3. Windows 7 recommendaton

Yes, since October 22nd, 2009, Microsoft's Windows 7 has been on the market. I'm often asked if it is beneficial to upgrade to this software. Generally, if you are using Microsoft's Vista operating system, you will probably see improvements which you will like. If you are using Microsoft's XP operating system, I suggest that you be cautious. Why? Well, you may find major compatibility issues between your older computer and the base requirements for Windows 7. Rather than spend \$119 for a single-user Home version operating system upgrade, or \$149 for a three-user Home upgrade version, you may be better off financially to consider a new computer. Since your older machine with it's XP is likely to be three to five years old, I suggest that you consider upgrading to a completely new computer instead. Whether a dual-core or quad-core processor, most new machines come with faster processors, more memory, and larger/faster hard disk drives.

I'm writing this story with a dual-core HP laptop which cost me under \$500 after rebate. This laptop runs circles around all the older machines I use in training and it includes the Windows 7 operating system. TOP PRODUCER 8i, being browser based, works perfectly with this new operating system.

Just be aware that some specialized programs you may have had on your older machine may require upgrades to work with Windows 7. An example is that my Dragon Naturally Speaking and Omnipage programs from Nuance both require upgrades. This also applies to some drivers, such as those for external devices, such as printers and scanners. This happened when Windows XP replaced Windows 98/Windows ME, and when Windows Vista replaced XP. Generally, the evolutionary process comes with some headaches but with improved productivity.

4. non-TOP PRODUCER 8i backup alternatives

Thankfully, TOP PRODUCER 8i, being web-based, precludes the necessity of our making backups of our contact records, plans, libraries, etc. Yet, most of us keep valuable information outside of TOP PRODUCER 8i as well. For this, we certainly require some type of backup procedure.

There are a multitude of external hard disk drives designed for backing up your data, as well as online Internet based 'cloud' backup options. The most often used external hard disk drives are Universal Serial Bus (USB) and Firewire, each of which draws its power directly from your computer. Faster than either of these are the External Serial Advanced Technology Attachment (eSATA) drives which speed up your backups, but do require external power. There are numerous drives available which will suit your purposes. Whether you use a backup program which comes with your external drive, or acquire other software, I encourage you to schedule frequent backups of your important data files.

And, if you have not previously done so, build yourself a restore DVD for your computer. Just in case your hard disk drive crashes, you want to be able to install a newer, larger drive, and

restore your operating system. From here you can restore your data backup to get you up and running again.

5. Create a keyboard shortcut to power off your monitor

No matter how many monitors you have up and running, using the power buttons to turn off the monitors can be a little bit of a pain. Why not create a desktop/keyboard shortcut to turn them all off at once? You'll need to download a small utility called NirCmd, which you can get either from http://download.cnet.com/NirCmd/3000-2094_4-77191.html or <http://www.vistanews.com/9I1P6M/090723-NirCmd> .

The program can also do much more. NirCmd is a small command-line utility that allows you to do some useful tasks without displaying any user interface. By running NirCmd with a simple command-line option, you can write and delete values and keys in the Registry, write values into INI file, dial to your internet account or connect to a VPN network, restart windows or shut down the computer, create a shortcut to a file, change the created/modified date of a file, change your display settings, turn off your monitor, open the door of your CD-ROM drive, and more.

Version 2.37 added a help command function to the program.

After making your download, create a shortcut to turn off your monitor as follows:

1. Right click the desktop and select New
2. Select Shortcut
3. Browse to the location where you saved NirCmd.exe
4. In the Create Shortcut dialog box, where you type the location of the item, put quotation marks around the path, then add this to the end: `cmdwait 1000 monitor off` (Thus the contents of the box should look something like this: "C:\ Users \ YourName \ Downloads \ nircmd.exe" `cmdwait 1000 monitor off`)
5. Click next
6. To assign a keyboard shortcut, right click the shortcut icon and select Properties
7. On the Shortcut tab, pick a key combination
8. You can also change the icon to something more appropriate by clicking the Change Icon button
9. Click OK

Now you can shut down the monitors by clicking the icon or by pressing the shortcut key combination.

Agent.signature

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