

TOP PRODUCER COACHING & TRAINING

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Certified Professional 2009 **Top Producer 8i** Certified Trainer **Top Producer**

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TOP PRODUCER 8i e-mail newsletter for January 2011 from Dwight Kitchens

Please deliver this subscription newsletter to :

Another year rolls around with some exciting changes in store. The real estate markets appear to be improving, although slowly. Major telecommunications companies are starting to roll out system wide improvements which may impact the way we work. AT&T, Sprint, and Verizon are starting to roll out 4G networks in many more locations. While it may not happen overnight, it may impact the equipment we purchase over the next year.

For those using 3G broadband devices (USB stick modems and MiFi multi-computer modems) to connect with TOP PRODUCER Systems and with your MLS, 4G broadband service is right around the corner. Most telecommunications companies limit your broadband on 3G networks based on their pricing tiers (5GB for \$60, etc.). With 4G networks, most vendors anticipate offering unlimited access for a fixed fee. Since 4G has the capacity of being 10 times faster than 3G, those in an area either currently or scheduled to be served by 4G should look at a combined 4G/3G device as their next upgrade. When traveling, if you drive out of a 4G service area, your broadband modem drops back to 3G service.

Both Sprint and Verizon will offer 4G/3G Mifi modems for up to five wi-fi devices in the near future. Personally, I prefer a USB 4G/3G stick modem which can be connected to an external router. An example would be those products from [Cradlepoint Technologies](#) which permit from 15-32 computer connections off the same USB stick modem. With the significant speed of the 4G service, I believe many REALTORS could replace their DSL/Cable Modem service with 4G wireless service. Since the wireless 4G service is portable, it can be used either in the office or out. I'm replacing my older 3G Cradlepoint router with a newer [Cradlepoint PHS300](#) router which connects up to 15 users and supports both 3G/4G broadband speeds. Now I just have to

wait to see whether AT&T, Sprint, or Verizon covers my location first before deciding which USB modem to purchase.

If you don't desire to travel around with a connected laptop/tablet, yet desire access to your TP 8i data, remember that TOP PRODUCER Systems' Mobility Product line supports the iPhone, Blackberry, Palm, and Windows 7 Mobile.

In reflection, a decade ago I started traveling further afield to train REALTORS on TOP PRODUCER software. During this time we were talking desktop versions (4.2, 5.1, and System 6). It was not until TOP PRODUCER 6i that I started worrying about having Internet connectivity on which to train. Since then we've gone through TP 6i, TP 7i, and TP 8i. In each case, the demands on your Internet connection has increased as the capabilities of the program expanded. Unless you are still on either dialup or satellite, our Internet connection options have significantly increased over the past few years, with quantum leaps coming in the near future.

As you enter 2011, consider how your telecommunications choices impact you real estate practice. You may soon find new tools which further untethered you from a fixed location.

Dwight

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Check www.DwightKitchens.com for the latest details.

Please forward a copy of this newsletter to friends using TOP PRODUCER8i.

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1. Building a Birthday Card Plan

Should you desire to send electronic birthday cards to your clients, I suggest you consider making a plan with 5-10 e-mails containing cards, then repeat sending the same cards over and over again. Therefore, for a plan with five cards, we would repeat sending the same cards in years 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, etc.

To setup the plan, we add activities, in this case an e-mail, which will be sent. Each message is scheduled to be delivered 365 apart. The plan pulls its message from a e-mail library category with the same or similar name, such as this library entitled " . Birthday cards ". The first

birthday card e-mail is named "First Birthday". This simple naming convention helps prevent errors.

If you design your e-mail so that it requires no further intervention on your part prior to delivery, you can check the automated send button when designing the plan.

FULL SCREEN QUICK ACCESS

* Birthday Plan by e-mail 🎂

Type: Action plan

ACTIVITY TYPE

Activity Type *

ACTIVITY DETAILS

Description [Add](#)

Assigned to

Event Due * day(s) from Plan Start Date [Use calendar to calculate days](#)

Priority High Medium Low

Drop from Activities day(s) after Email date

Weekend Activities
If activity falls on a Saturday, move it to
If activity falls on a Sunday, move it to

EMAIL TEMPLATES

Category *

Template * [Template Preview](#) [Edit Template](#) [Create New Template](#)

Email Attachments
The maximum size for all attachments is 5MB

Automated Send? Yes No

Include Signature? Yes No

NOTES

Note

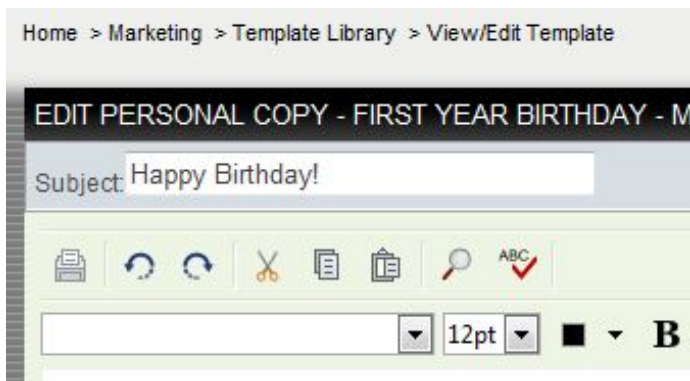
Should you want to all the activities in your plan, you may print out the plan. Your results will look similar the the below screen. You will note that the plan includes a recurring To-Do, which tells you to call the client each year a day or so prior to your client's birthday. This is a recurring annual event. Then, the plan includes an e-mail card each year either 365 or 364 (leap year) apart. These are separate activities as they use different cards. Of course, to save effort in the design, this plan uses five separate cards which are recycled in years 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, etc. I'm hoping that the client can't remember the card I sent five years previously (fingers crossed!).

Action Plan for * Birthday Plan by e-mail

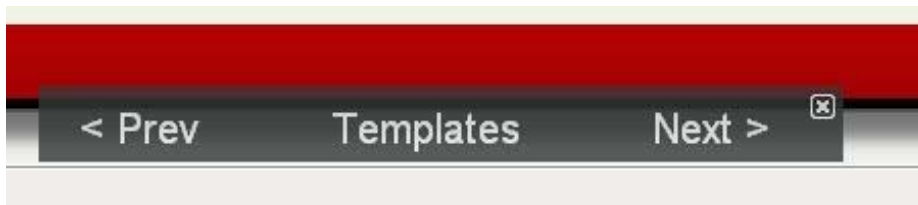
Activity	Description	Day	From
To-do	Setup recurring call	0	From p
Email	First Birthday message	365	From p
Email	Second Birthday	730	From p
Email	Third year birthday	1095	From p
Email	Fourth Year Birthday	1460	From p
Email	Fifth year birthday	1825	From p

Should you have a burning desire to print out each activity within the plan, I suggest that there is no easy way. But, there is a simple, multi step process which works well. For this plan, each of the e-mails are stored in an e-mail library entitled ".Birthday Cards ". Therefore, select Marketing / Template Library / Email Library and click the drop-down for ".Birthday Cards ". The library will show all of your cards. Select all the e-mail cards. Click Mass Open.

As the first birthday card opens, you will see under the subject an option to Print the e-mail.



Click the printer icon, make sure the correct printer is selected, print the e-mail card, then click NEXT at the bottom of your screen



to move to the Second Birthday Card and repeat. Do this for each e-mail message and you will have hard copies of each e-mail which will be received by your clients.

Of course, all of the above implies that you have the birth date for each of your clients to whom you want to apply this plan. There are at least four means of getting client birth dates:

- a. Pull from driver's license or passport at time of closing
- b. Make copy of driver's license as a security measure when you first show a home to the client
- c. Pull from Facebook Client Profile, often accessible through the Contact Record / Summary screen
- d. Look it up at www.BirthDatabase.com

Put the birth date in both the Contact Record / Contact Details tab. I would recommend that it also be duplicated in the Associates tab. In this fashion, if the husband, wife, children, pets, home anniversary, and wedding anniversary are all within the Associates tab, you see everything in one place.

2. Branded TOP PRODUCER 8i Versions

When teaching, I often find that REALTORS are using a generic version of TOP PRODUCER 8i when a branded version exists. While most branded versions include corporate logos and possibly some customized flyers, others include very customized materials. I suggest that if you work with one of the following firms, and you were never made aware of the existence of your customized version, consider asking Customer Service (800-444-8570) to upgrade your version. Whether your move firms or your firm changes 'brands', the switch to the proper 'branded version' is done at no charge. Just remember that any brand specific materials may be lost unless copied to a personalized version. An example would be that brand specific plans with associated letters/e-mail/postcards would each need to be copied once in order to have them

remain when you change 'branded versions'.

Century 21, Coldwell Banker, ERA, Exit Realty, Keller Williams, Re/Max, Real Estate One

3. Domain Names

You probably remember some of my thoughts on Domain Names for REALTORS. Yes, I do believe that if your name is relatively easy to spell, that you should have a Domain Name which includes your own name. Therefore, mine is www.DwightKitchens.com . It easily converts to an e-mail address of Dwight@DwightKitchens.com . In order to get any Domain Name, you must register it with one of the many Domain Name registrars. There is a cost.

Generally, you can subscribe for up to 10 years in advance. I've used www.GoDaddy.com in the past to register my own only because they offered the lowest prices at the time. Last I looked, they were offering Domain Name registration for \$11.44 per year for up to 10 years. You can get similar service from www.Register.com for only \$8.95 per year for up to 5 years. So, check around to see who offers the best pricing.

Once advantage of having your own domain name is that it is not company specific. Should you ever choose to move firms, or your firm consolidates with another, you might be forced to change your e-mail address. If you have your own Domain Name, this would not pose a problem.

But, I also suggest that you consider getting some additional Domain Names which point to your current web-site. These might include the city / neighborhood name of areas you serve. When potential clients perform searches of the web, hopefully, one of your Domain Names will receive a hit. A search for homes would probably not get a hit on your name, but one of the Domain Names reflected below might. Examples might include:

PolkCityHomes.com
PolkCountyHomes.com
CentralFloridaHomes.com
LakelandFloridaHomes.com
LakelandHomes.com
Over55Homes.com
PolkHomes.com
NortheastPolk.com

Of course, the Homes in any of the names could be substituted with RealEstate, giving other possibilities. The idea is to give someone searching the web a likelihood of finding your web-site. Since you have your own Domain Name, should you ever move your practice to another location, you can just add new domain names which point to your revised web-site. Don't forget, each of these Domain Names can point to a single web-site, so you still only require one site for all your real estate needs, unless you want to be more specific.

4. Applying Revised Letter Plans

This might be of interest since we have been discussing plans over the past few e-mails.

Problem: I tried to do the procedure you explained (adjusting margins on letters), however it won't let me change anything to the stock templates only copies of them. I have clients set up on the stock programs. Is there a way to search and set them up onto a copy of the templates without duplicating the letters already sent out?

Solution: The best way to do this is to take the Plan you are using, copy the Plan and all associated materials to a newly named plan with a letter library with a matching name (easier to find later). Now, go to the associated materials in the library, select all, open all with a Mass Open, fix the margins on the first item, click Save, click Next, fix the margins on the second item, click save, click Next, etc. Work your way through all the materials. When finished saving all changes, you may either back out of or close the library.

Now, you have a plan with all the associated materials setup properly with the margins you want.

I'm assuming that these are letters since you are referring the margins. Therefore, if you have set your plan to drop all letters after two days, if you assign a plan to a client with an earlier starting date, all letters prior to two days before today will drop off, leaving only the undelivered letters.

Go to Calendar / Plans Manager and select your original plan (not the newly named plan). With the plan open, click the fourth tab, Applied Contacts. Click Start Date to sort in the order in which your plan was applied to your contacts. Click Applied Contacts Report at bottom left corner to create a report of all clients on this old plan, sorted by start date. Print it out to get a paper copy from which to work. Note that you probably have multiple clients to whom you have applied the plan on the same start date. This makes it possible for you to select those clients with the same start date and perform as Mass Update to delete their old plan. When it asks if you want to keep the previously delivered materials, the answer is yes. This keeps a record of the previously delivered materials in the Contact Record's Activities tab, Completed category. Next, you search (select) the same group of clients, and apply your new plan which has the proper margins with drop off dates for each of the letters, again by Mass Update, using the original start date. The new plan should drop off (ignore) the previously delivered materials, and the computer will prompt you to print the upcoming letters on the appropriate dates. Do this for each start date group you have in the Applied Contacts Report. This permits you to work through groups of people on previously applied plans and assign them updated plans.

5. Start 2011 off with New Stationery

While TOP PRODUCER 8i has stationery options, few REALTORS modify the standard templates for their specific use. This article will hopefully help you modify the standard template so that it more fits your specific needs. The example below reflects the second

stationery template with hyperlinks shown directly below the header. Should you desire to change the header, you have the option of editing this portion of the stationery.



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Dear Michael & Judy,

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Cras et nulla. Ut adipiscing dapibus est. Suspendisse sodales porttitor libero. Sed ornare mollis nisi. Aliquam sodales justo at sem. Nulla facilisi. Nullam sodales. Fusce consectetur. Vestibulum id leo. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Aenean et massa ut lacus aliquet congue. Suspendisse quis nunc eu nisi vulputate lacinia. Aliquam ante. Aenean fermentum, turpis non cursus iaculis, lorem purus auctor justo, ut aliquet augue arcu at magna. Fusce varius, nulla ac sodales sodales, dui quam suscipit urna, quis blandit ipsum ipsum in urna. Maecenas ullamcorper orci lobortis augue. Morbi ac sem ut erat suscipit pellentesque.

Nam in felis in metus tincidunt cursus. Nunc fermentum, arcu nec sagittis ultrices, metus erat fermentum orci, vitae feugiat nisi lacus et neque. Ut diam sapien, dignissim nec, accumsan ultrices, blandit et, magna. Ut sem elit, eleifend ut, faucibus ut, aliquam quis, ipsum. Phasellus semper nunc ac metus. Cras et sem eu dui aliquet tempor. Aliquam placerat ante ut massa. Duis convallis metus sed purus. Ut libero. Proin at lectus vitae neque tempor ultricies. Ut eu dolor sit amet urna hendrerit sodales. Nam quis risus. Nulla facilisi. Pellentesque in pede. Sed semper metus ac risus. Donec id ipsum. Sed ac massa blandit dolor sodales sagittis. Nam sagittis quam eu orci. Integer tempus fringilla lacus. Nam nisl arcu, ultrices sit amet, eleifend at, convallis ac, nisl.

Vestibulum semper varius tellus. Proin mi. Aliquam erat volutpat. Etiam vel sem in dui dictum blandit. Vivamus molestie mattis neque. Morbi dapibus. In eget tellus. Duis libero neque, laoreet a, mattis eu, porttitor non, ante. Aenean varius tincidunt nunc. Nam id orci eget sem porta vehicula. Sed lacinia dolor et risus. Nulla ac nisl a purus mollis malesuada. Aliquam vehicula vehicula lacus. Etiam consectetur erat sit amet orci. Aenean gravida, mi nec euismod porta, libero odio commodo ante, eu lacinia sem sem vitae pede.

Open the stationery, then click <Edit Stationery in Editor> at the bottom left corner of your screen.



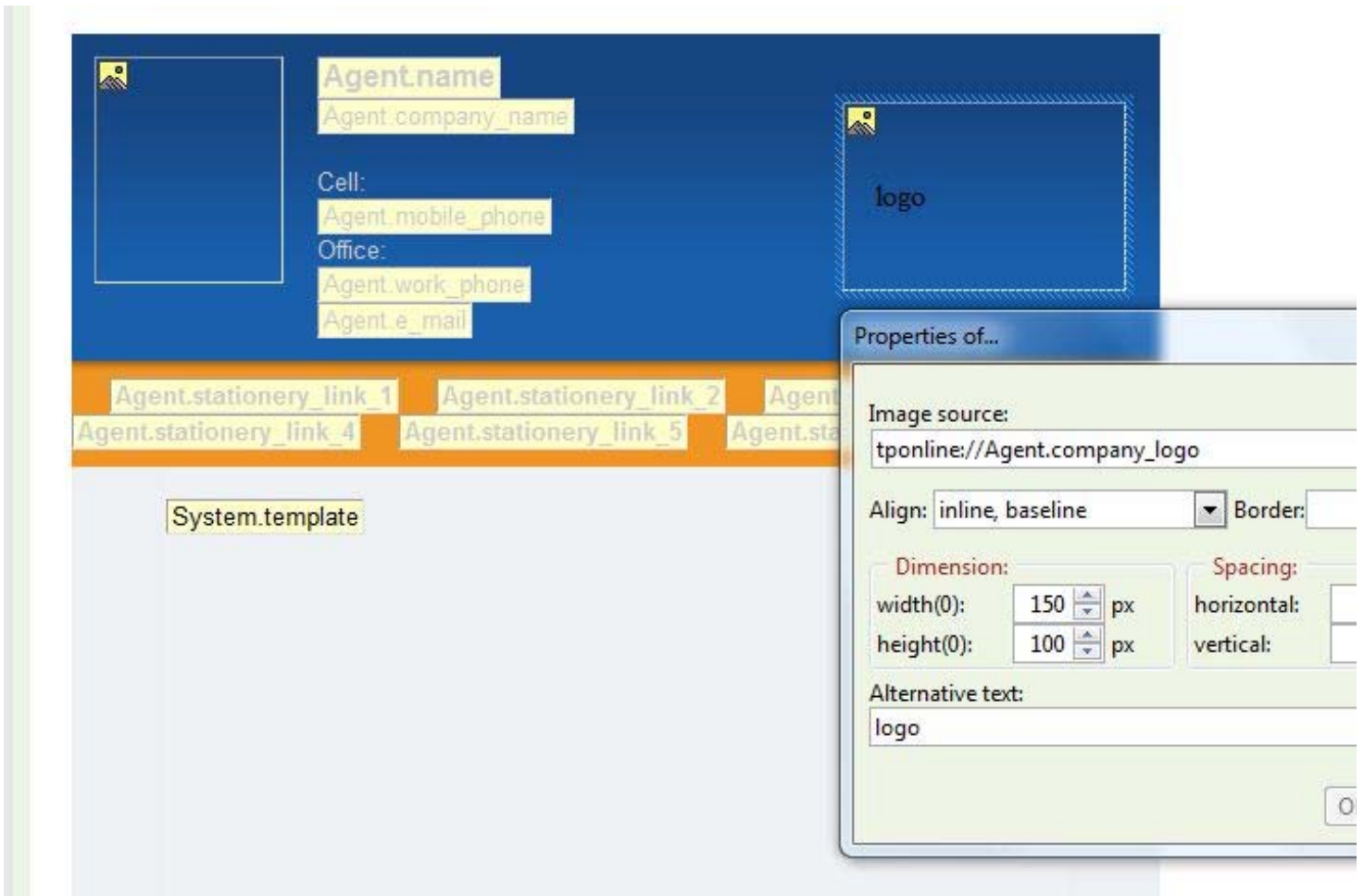
You should now see the stationery with all its' component parts. Since your stationery is made up primarily of merge codes, you may either add or delete the merge codes, alternatively, you may type in text not called by merge codes. As an example, if you want a team motto to show up rather than the Agent.company_name, and you don't have a merge code for the team motto. But, you can delete the Agent.company_name from the template, and physically type in your logo, such as "The World's Best REALTOR" (no modesty here!).



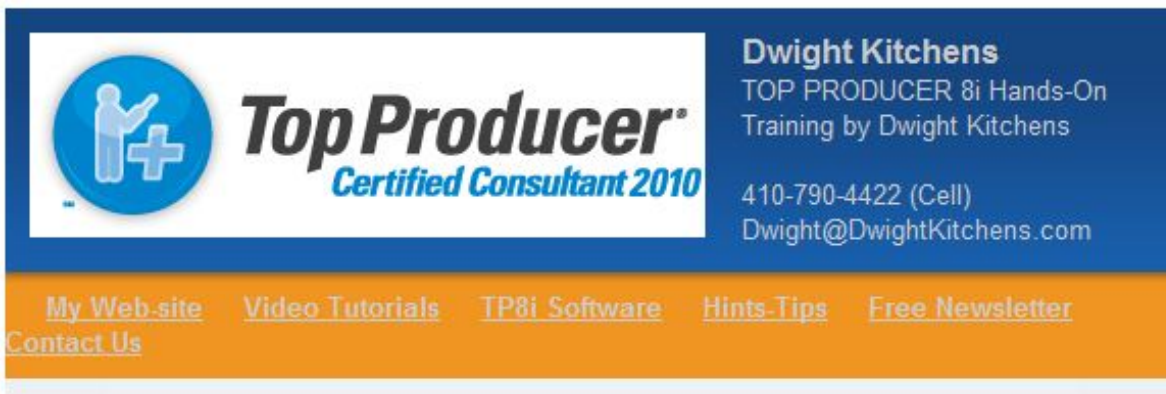
Note that the System.template may not be deleted, as it is a placeholder for your e-mail message which will be encapsulated within the stationery.

In the next graphic, you will see a Properties of... box. This is entered by highlighting a graphic (in this case, logo), right-clicking the highlighted graphic, and left-clicking Image. This gives you the Properties of... box. Here you can change the Dimensions (width and height) of your photo in pixels. Generally, you don't need to do this if your graphics were properly sized within My Account / Photos. But, you could fix a bad photo here by changing the height/width to better match the aspect ratio at which your original photo was taken.

This template uses merge codes for Agent.photo and Comany.logo.



Alternatively, you could delete each of these and physically place a physical photo (click Insert picture from file - and link a photo from another source). We are not using a merge code but are instead inserting an actual photograph within your stationery template.



Once you have finished your changes, click Save and Close to record your final design.

STATIONERY USAGE

To be inserted into:

- Compose Email
- Mass Email
- Email/Plan Activities (includes outstanding, pending, and auto-send activities)
- Service Report Emails
- Customer Web Page Emails

Save & Edit Stationery Save & Close Cancel

6. Essential Computer Programs

Computers get cluttered with new programs, get damaged hard disk drives, and sometimes just wear out. Often, before anything catastrophic happens, we purchase a newer, faster, cheaper computer as a replacement. But, to keep your current machine operating smoothly, you might want to consider adding the following tools to your system. I'm only suggesting free programs to encourage you to use software tools to enhance your computing experience.

Antivirus - Protect your computer from external interference with an antivirus and malware protection program. Two free versions which work well are [Avira](#) and [AVG Free 8.5 Antivirus](#).

Utilities - Get rid of clutter from your computer using iObit's [Advanced System Care](#) . For safety, always consider making a Windows Restore Point both before using, although I've never needed to return to the previous Restore Point with this program. Additionally, a very thorough hard disk defragmentation program is available from iObit in the form of their [Smart Defrag](#) software. The Deep Optimize routine will move the most used programs to the fastest portion of your hard disk drive but takes the longest time.

Image Backup - Your computer manufacturer generally makes an image of your computer available on another partition of your hard disk drive. This image permits you to restore your system should a problem occur. The manufacturer may also permit you to order factory replacement disk set should you require it in the future. But, this image is of your hard disk drive as it left the factory, not as you have it configured when it fails. Therefore, I recommend that you consider making your own image of your hard disk drive after you have installed your programs. Another free package to help you do this is from Macrium, called [Reflect](#). If your computer has either a CD-R or DVD R burner, you should be able to easily make your own, personalized backup disks. Once done, if your hard drive either becomes corrupted or fails, you have a recent backup you can reinstall once your hard drive problem is fixed.

7. ClipX clipboard manager

I've mentioned this program before, but the instructions may not have been sufficient for you to easily build your own list of clips. This program permits you to store up to 256 paragraphs

which can be instantly recalled for use within any Windows program. To start: download all the program modules from www.clipx.org . The setup, update, and stickies modules are those which are most important, although you could choose the rest as well. Install ClipX and all the accessories programs first. You will then get a new ClipX icon in the running programs of your system tray.

Next, modify the paragraphs below so that they make sense for your clients. Once this is done, you may copy them into your clipboard, then perform the following keystrokes:

ClipX (right-click the ClipX icon in the system tray), Configure (left-click), stickies (left-click), Add (left-click), New Text (left-click), (place cursor in box, right-click, left-click paste) to paste paragraphs. The paragraph is now stored within ClipX.

MLS: Your home information has been entered into the local Multiple List System. This information may be seen by prospective purchasers as they browse web-sites such as www.REALTOR.com, << www.XXXX.com, www.XXXX.com >>.

CSS: The Centralized Showing System will record feedback provided by a REALTOR's client after seeing your home. Please go to www.showings.com to see feedback on your address.

AD: An advertisement has been placed in the << newspaper name(s) >> to market your home to prospects in the << XXXX (example - Nashville-Murfreesboro) >> area.

Flyers: A new flyer has been made showing your property. Copies will be provided to you for use at your home, Additional copies have been sent to all of my prospective buyers and to the top 100 REALTORS in << XXXX >> County

Open House: Ad was placed in << XXXX (name of newspaper)>> for OPEN HOUSE on << XX/XX (enter date, such as 6/5) >>

Lockbox: A SUPRA lockbox has been placed on your property to enable other REALTORS to show your property in your absence. For enhanced security, it also permits us to track which REALTORS entered your residence

Listing - Representing Seller
Contract Ratification Date
Closing Cost Credit
Escalation Addendum (Yes) (No)
Administration Fee (from listing agreement)
Property Status - vacant/owner occupied/tenant

Closing - Representing Seller
Type Loan - VA/FHA/Conventional
Rent Back - Until (Date)

Closing - Representing Buyer

Contract Contingencies due dates:

Home Inspection - Date/Time

Seller Notified of Date/Time of Home Inspection

Home Inspection report received by buyers agent

Home Inspection report signed by our Seller

Date Home Inspection Contingency released

Financing Due Date

Date Released

Appraisal Due Date

Appraisal Inspection date

Appraisal contingency released

HOA/Condo docs orders

Address to send HOA/Condo resale packet

Date Buyer received documents

3 day review period ends

Add as many standard paragraphs as you use within your practice. You can store up to 256 paragraphs with the ClipX program, and you can reorder them to suit your needs.

8. OfferMatic

If you are like me, you track many of your purchases by the use of your credit cards. I've recently subscribed to Groupon for my neighborhood. I get daily offers to save on purchases of things I may or may not want/need. In contrast, a new tool called [OfferMatic](#) actually securely tracks my credit card purchases and offers targeted advertisements of things I may want/need. Since they see my purchases, they can automatically apply current rebates without your using coupons and codes. Discounts are advertised to be 50% to 90% off, discount levels dependent upon how much I take advantage of their free service. Your account is anonymous, they use bank level encryption standards, and your individual data is never sold. I suggest take a look at [OfferMatic](#) .

9. Training

We've yet to make training plans for this Spring/Summer/Fall. With a drop in demand, and a rise in the cost of travel, we are not sure which Associations/Boards might desire to offer training during 2011. While we will attempt to make contact and confirm training locations, we are not yet sure where our plans may take us in 2011.

Alternative, we can always offer one-on-one and small group training by a combination of computer and teleconference. This saves the travel cost/time and permits us to customize the training based on your personal desires and needs. Let us know if you might be interested in personalized training in the coming months.

Agent.signature

Agent.disclaimer