

## Real Estate Conventions – Networking for Success

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The typical real estate agent truly enjoys industry conventions. All those networking opportunities! If he is like most agents, he comes home with a briefcase full of business cards, planning to set up his own nationwide referral network.

If he really is like most real estate agents, however, those business cards never make it past his ‘To Do’ stack. As soon as he returns home from convention, the everyday reality of listing and selling real estate kicks in and he simply forgets his plan to maximize those new contacts.

What if, instead, there was an easier way to turn those convention introductions into a world-class network? Once he learns this simple strategy, the practice will become habit and yet another way to expand his real estate sales footprint.

### FIRST, THINK STRATEGICALLY!

The first step to developing this profitable new habit is for the agent to strategize which conventions he will attend over the next twelve months. His franchising organization may host conventions, but he should also investigate events held by national groups such as NAR.

It certainly isn’t profitable for him to spend all his time at conventions; after all, selling real estate is what keeps his business running. But it’s a good investment in his future to attend a couple of conventions a year, simply because it gives him the opportunity to meet agents outside his market area.

He should also try to stretch himself a bit at one of the events he regularly attends. If he finds himself talking to the same people and attending the same roundtable discussions every year, it’s time to branch out. Signing up for a breakout session he wouldn’t normally attend is a good start. He will meet different people, and if he keeps his mind open to new information, will learn something that will benefit his business.

### NEXT, LOOK TO THE FUTURE!

Any agent who has been in real estate any length of time has met other agents who spend the entire convention telling ‘war stories’ about their greatest real estate deals. Those agents aren’t interested in learning new techniques, they’re too busy reliving past successes.

They may hand out a lot of business cards, but they are not interested in reciprocating with referrals, in fact, they can’t imagine doing business in any way differently than what they’re doing right now. They have probably never referred a seller moving out of their area to another agent.

Today's savvy agent knows better than to rest on past success and old strategies. He's taking advantage of the large number of real estate professionals present at conventions, hoping to learn from them as well as making connections for future business. Every business card he collects becomes part of his future marketing plan.

### **FINALLY, UNPACK THOSE BUSINESS CARDS!**

If the business cards he collects at a convention never leave his briefcase, he might just as well not have collected them. The key to optimizing those convention connections is to stay in touch. That doesn't simply mean calling to ask for their referrals to his city. It might mean organizing regular calls with a whole group of agents he's met, to discuss the latest marketing techniques. What would happen if he created a special newsletter just for agents outside his market, featuring one agent's marketing tips each month?

His hope, of course, is that he will receive referrals for buyers moving from other agents' markets to his. To keep that possibility open, he must plan to stay connected by scheduling calls, letters and email messages to each of the agents he meets at conventions.

Busy agents may not remember to refer buyers to him unless he's kept in contact. He also cannot forget to refer his out-of-market business to them. A one-sided relationship doesn't last long!

Planning to meet, and stay connected to, other motivated real estate professionals is an important part of any agent's future success. The wise agent will begin to plan an expanded convention networking strategy today.